

SPACE WARS

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FUTURE!!

MONSTER VEGETONS:
DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS!!

QUARK!

SPACED-OUT COMICS!

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THE MOST CHILLING
EVER!!

SNEAK
PREVIEW:
METEOR!!

SUB-
MERGING
WITH
CAPTAIN
NEMO!!





Barbarella, look out! This summer, well-known fantasy film femme Carolina Munro will grace motion-picture screens throughout the country in *The Adventures of Stella Star*. Stella is a daring space pilot, who, armed with a super intelligent robot and a friendly alien humanoid, searches for a missing space launch on various planets, and does battle with evil forces who seek to destroy their galaxy. Watch for it!

SPACE WARS

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AUGUST 1978

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EDITORIAL

The city of the future from *Logan's Run*.




Well, sci-fi fans, it's time for another issue of **SPACE WARS**. Sorry to take you away from your *Star Wars* cards and your lunch money but, what the heck, we have to make a buck too! We know, \$1.50 doesn't grow on trees, but, then again, where else can you find exclusive color photos from

The Adventures of Stella Star, a preview of the new multi-million dollar sci-fi epic, **Meteor**, plus complete info on all the latest science fiction and fantasy films to be hitting your local theatres in the near and distant future. It's all here, and much, much more. Okay gang, take that buck

and a half that's burning a hole in your pocket and buy a copy of this monumental issue, that's sure to enrich your life and become a collectors' item as well. You'll be glad you did!

The Editors

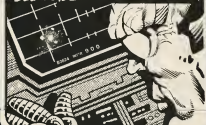
Gifts Of Silver SPLENDOR



THE THOUGHT-SHIP
TURNS STEADILY
AS ITS COMMANDER
DRIVES A STEADY
STREAM OF PSYCHIC
IMPULSES INTO
THE VAST COMPUTERS
ON BOARD! ALL IS
READY FOR THE LAST
GREAT ONSLAUGHT

TO HIS PEOPLE, HE HAD BEEN KNOWN AS **NEVORMIEN-B** -- TO THE
SENTI HOST, LYING IN WAIT SOMEWHERE IN THE VAST BLACKNESS
AHEAD HE IS AN EXTINCT **DINOSAUR** -- THE LAST OF THE **ACTON**
RACE LEFT ALIVE, ALL OTHERS HAVING PERISHED AT THE HANDS
OF THE **LIZARD-MEN OF SENTI!**

THE SHIP SENSES THE PRESENCE OF OBJECTS SITTING IN SILENCE BEYOND? WAITING FOR HIM IN THE DARK! COLD-LIKE THE BLOOD OF THEIR OCCUPANTS... **THE SENTI BLOCKADE!**



NOW THE HUM OF THE ENGINE BECOMES A SHRILL SCREAM THAT WOULD BURST THE DRUM OF ANY EAR... BUT THE ACTON HAVE LONG SINCE DONE AWAY WITH SUCH UNNECESSARY ORGANS



AND THEN HE IS **AMONG THEM**, **VIOLENT FLASHES** OF LIGHT STREAK THE VOID WITH RAINBOW HUES...



...DESPITE THEIR NUMBERS, THE **SENTI VESSELS** FALL PREY TO THE MORE ADVANCED DISRUPTERS OF THE THOUGHT-SHIP...

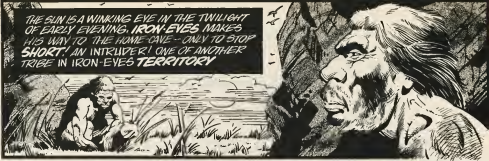
IN SHOCKING BURSTS THAT EQUAL THE INTENSITY OF **SUNS**, THE SENTI PERISH **HISSING**...

UNTIL THEY ARE NO MORE "WE WOULD HAVE WON THE WAR IF WE HAD HAD AN ARMADA OF SHIPS SUCH AS **THIS**," THE ACTON **PONDERS**...

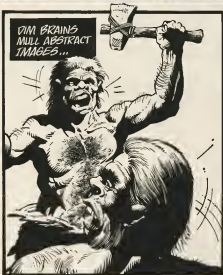
BUT THEY HAD NOT... SO NEWORNIEN B SHAKES SUCH THOUGHTS ASIDE AND PREPARES TO DELIVER THE **GIFT**...



THE SUN IS A WINKING EYE IN THE TWILIGHT OF EARLY EVENING. IRON-EYES MAKES HIS WAY TO THE HOME CAVE -- ONLY TO STOP SHORT! AN INTRUDER! ONE OF ANOTHER TRIBE IN IRON-EYES TERRITORY



DIM BRAINS MULL ABSTRACT IMAGES...



HATE...



ATTACK!

KILL!



SNAP!

WEAPONLESS, IRON EYES FALLS EASILY BEFORE THE BLOWS OF HIS OPPONENT...



SURPRISE!



WHO FORGETS THE BATTLE THE INSTANT HE IS NO LONGER CONFRONTED WITH DANGER.



HIS SKULL AFIRE WITH
NUMBING PAIN, IT IS
HOURS LATER WHEN IRON
EYES MANAGES TO STRUGGLE
UPRIGHT. HIS TOOL HAS
FAILED HIM



IT HAS NOT WORKED
CORRECTLY... YET
HE DOES **NOT**
KNOW WHY...



IRON EYES
PONDERS
THINGS HE
CANNOT FULLY
COMPREHEND.
DISAPPOINT-
-MENT.
FRUSTRA-
-TION.
WHY HAS
THIS THING
FAILED? HE
KNOWS NOT...



THE MYRIAD IMAGES IN HIS HEAD
BEFUDDLE HIM -- HE LOSES INTEREST
IN HIS THOUGHTS ALMOST IMMEDIATELY...



...HE IS
HUNGRY!

THEN... **SEARING, INTENSE LIGHT!**



THE SUN GOD HAS COME DOWN FROM THE
DARK HEAVENS...

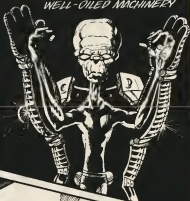


AND IRON-EYES KNOWS
THE FULL MEANING
OF TERROR...

THE **ACTON** PREPARES TO LEAVE
THE SHIP; HE COMMANDS THE
THOUGHT SUIT TO ALLOW HIM
FREEDOM...



TONIGHT HE WILL WALK AS HIS
ANCESTORS DID—UNWAIVED BY
WELL-OILED MACHINERY



AND NEVORHIEN-B STEPS
FORTH WITH THE GIFT...



HIS CHOICE OF WORLDS
HAS BEEN A RANDOM ONE

ONE **BACKWARD** PLANET
IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER!



HE OFFERS THE
TREASURE!

AND INTO THE GFE
CREATURE'S PAWS FALLS
THE **ENTIRE**
INCONCEIVABLE
KNOWLEDGE OF THE
ACTON RACE, FULLY
CONTAINED IN THE STAFF
AND PASSED ON TO
BETTER A NEW WORLD.



NEVORHIEN-
6 IS PLEASED
THAT HE HAS BEEN
ABLE TO GIVE AT LEAST
A **FRAGMENT** OF THE
ACTON CULTURE. HE OFFERS
THE GALACTIC PEACE SIGN
TO THE CREATURE BEFORE HIM.



WHO SEES
A **DEATH**
BLOW IN
EVERY
MOVE...



AND SO **STRIKES FIRST...**



TRIGGERING THE STAFF! STRANGE
NEW IMAGES BOMBARD HIS
BRAIN!

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OF GREATNESS!



And Man
begins his
long
DESCENT
into
CIVILIZATION



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FUTURE FANTASY

By Tom Rogers



Daren is growing up... and he looks as nasty as ever in **Damen: Omen 2**

A scene from the upcoming **Stella Star, Queen of the Galaxy**.

The science-fiction and fantasy boom continues! Film and television companies are planning to unleash an unprecedented blitz of SF-oriented material in the coming months. With bigger budgets and better actors, the future is clear: more high-quality fantasy on the screen.

■ Dan O'Bannon, who handled special effects for **Dark Star** and did some work on **Star Wars**, has coscripted **Alien** for 20th Century Fox. Ron Shusett, the executive producer, also worked on the screenplay, which deals with a creature that is being transported aboard an Earthbound spaceship. The thing begins transforming itself into a variety of monsters and proceeds to attack the crew

members. Walter Hill is directing this SF thriller.

Ariconn Internal Pictures is producing **Alien Terror**, with Chuck McNeill as producer, director and scriptwriter. Kathi Carey, John Woods and Caroline Brown star.

ITC Entertainment is now working on **Capricorn One**, which Warner Bros. is slated to release sometime next year. Produced by Paul N.

Lazarus III, the flick is written and directed by Peter Hyams. It deals with three astronauts who are scheduled to journey to Mars. When a fault in their life-support system is discovered, they are spirited away by Government agents who keep the trio incarcerated at a deserted hangar. The space flight goes off as planned, but the public doesn't know that there are no men on board the

ship. The mission is faked, using cameras and pretaped film, but the rocket is destroyed as it reenters our atmosphere. Learning this, the captives realize that they must escape or wait and be killed by the fanatics who have imprisoned them. Elliott Gould, James Brolin, Brenda Vaccaro, Sam Waterston, D. J. Simpson, Hal Holbrook and Telly

Sevelles star in this multimillion-dollar movie.

Walt Disney will release **The Cat from Outer Space** this year. Norman Tokar is directing and coproducing the script by Tek Key. Ron Miller is also coproducing, and the players include Ken Berry, Sandy Duncan, McLean Stevenson, Roddy McDowell, Ronnie Schell, Hans Conrard and Harry Morgan. It opens when the title



▲ Meet Colonel Steven West, an astronaut who returns from a space flight to Saturn only to find that he has contracted a dreaded ailment which causes his flesh to melt away—unless it is constantly nourished by other human flesh and blood, as in this scene from American International's **The Incredible Melting Man**.

Andrew Stevens portrays Robn, a young man possessed with psychic powers, in **The Fury**. ▶

character, Juner J5/9D Doric 4-7, is about to crash-land his flying saucer on Earth. The intelligent feline must repair the craft and lift off within 36 hours or be stranded here for the rest of his life. This problem is complicated when the Army locates the spaceship and transports it to a NASA research base. The alien makes friends with a perceptive scientist, and they set about trying to obtain \$120,000 worth of gold to power the vehicle. Of course, crooks interfere, and the otherworldly visitor must use his strange powers to prevail.

Columbia Pictures has announced that Saul David and Maury Cohen will produce **Cold War in a Country**



Garden, based on the sci-fi novel by Lindsay Gutteridge. Ken Middleham will handle the special effects for this tale of a group of people who are shrunk down to the size of insects. Filming should begin early next year.

Omen: The Omen, Part II is currently being lensed by 20th Century Fox. Produced by Harvey Bernhard and directed by Michael Mann,

this picks up where **The Omen** left off. The Devil's son is now a teenager, living in the White House and plotting to bring about the end of the world: Apocalypse. William Holden, Lee Grant and Jonathan Scott-Taylor star.

Spectacular Film Productions is making **Death Dimension** with the aid of Nichols Communications. Filming in California and Hawaii, the flick is produced by Harry Hope, directed by Al Adamson and stars Jim Kelly, Harold Sakata ("Oddjob" from **Goldfinger**), George Lazenby (James Bond in **On Her Majesty's Secret Service**) and Myron Lee.

Christopher Lee plays the Lord of the Undead once more in France's 1976 comedy **Dracula, Father and Son**, which is not yet available to the States. Edouard Molinaro directed and cowrote the screenplay with Jean-Marie Poiré and Alain Godard, loosely basing their flick on Claude Klotz's **Paris Vampire**. Herein the Count and his son flee from their Transylvanian castle when the communist government puts pressure on them. The older vampire makes his way to London, where he makes horror films, and his offspring goes to Paris, becoming a common laborer. The two are reunited, and Dracula seeks to guide his wayward son.

What next?

A joint effort between the U.S. and Israel will result in **The Dybbuk**, based on A. Anski's classic Hebrew play. Eebee Productions of L.A. and Menachem Golan, the Israeli producer-director, have made an agreement that calls for Golan to direct the horror flick. In it, a wandering spirit enters a human body, possesses it



▲ These extraterrestrials are preparing to meet **Stella Star, Queen of the Galaxy.**

A "growth" is created on Susan Strasberg's back for her role in **The Manitou**, a supernatural thriller about the reincarnation of a 400-year-old Indian medicine man.



▲ A hospital corridor is mysteriously transformed into a crystalline ice palace in this astonishing special-effects sequence from **The Manitou.**



▲ A terrified mother tries to save her child from the tarantulas in this scene from **Kingdom of the Spiders.**



▲ Master of special effects Rick Baker, noted for his work in **The Exorcist** and **Star Wars**, creates the makeup worn by Alex Rebar, star of **The Incredible Melting Man.**

and must be exorcised by some devout men. This sounds familiar.

Dino de Laurentiis, who brought us **King Kong** and **Orca**, has purchased the film and TV rights to King Features Syndicate's famous comic strip, "Flash Gordon." Since the series began on January 7, 1934, there have been three movie serials (**Flash Gordon**, **Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars**, **Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe**), a German-made TV program and a pornographic production entitled **Flesh Gordon**. Of course, there have also been many comic books and paperbacks relating the adventures of this intergalactic hero. Whether de Laurentiis (who, you might recall, promised us a **King Kong II**, but didn't deliver) actually makes a Flash Gordon movie is mere speculation at this point, but in the meantime we can hope for the best regarding a feature-length cartoon version that is scheduled for TV airing in the near future.

The Fury is a psychic thriller that 20th Century Fox has recently released. John Farris's screenplay is based on his own novel, which concerns some youngsters who are gifted with dangerous telekinetic abilities. This time around the heavies are the

C.I.A. Frank Yablans produced, Brian de Palma (**Carrie**) directed and Kirk Douglas, John Cassavetes, Amy Irving, Carrie Snodgrass and Charles Durning star. John Williams wrote the score.

Studio Film Corporation, an independent company, is working on **Gift From a Red Planet**. Bill Rebane is producer/director and Ingrid Newmeyer is the scriptwriter. Ralph Meeker, Carol Newell, Stafford Morgan, John F. Goff and George Raft head the cast.

Paramount has okayed **Heaven Can Wait** as a multimillion-dollar picture with Warren Beatty as producer, star and codirector (along with Buck Henry). Elaine May did the screenplay, which is not based on the 1943 comedy of the same name. Instead, it is a remake of **Here Comes Mr. Jordan**, a 1941 flick that presented Claude Rains as an angel that had to provide another body for a man who had died prematurely. Jack Warden, Julie Christie, Charles Grodin,

Buck Henry and Dyan Cannon are also in the cast.

Kirk Douglas also stars in **Holocaust 2000**, a futuristic disaster film from Embassy Productions and Rome-Aston Films. Alberto de Martino is directing a script that he, Sergio Donati and Michael Robson wrote. Edmondo Amati is producing, and Simon Ward, Agostina Belli, Anthony Quayle and Adolfo Celi costar. The theme is that "nuclear power plants



▲ This little girl finds herself in the middle of **The Kingdom of the Spiders**.

The town misfit becomes an alien monster in **Laserblast**.

Scientist Frank Wilson, played by Ken Berry, walks around the airplane hanger where the military has put a spacecraft in this scene from **The Cat from Outer Space**. Walt Disney Productions—World rights reserved.



are Satanic instruments for universal destruction."

Rick Baker, who played de Laurentis' **King Kong** and designed the award-winning apesuit, and who has created the makeup for a number of other films—including the barroom scene in **Star Wars**—has now done **The Incredible Melting Man** for American International. Produced by Samuel W. Gelfman and directed by Williams Sachs, the movie deals with a U.S. astronaut who returns from a mission to Saturn and finds that he has a serious problem: he is melting. In order to retard this unprecedented medical condition, he must eat human flesh; the absorption of living cells slows down his affliction, but at the same time it causes him to grow, foot by foot. Either way, he is a mon-



Ken Berry with Jake, the space cat, in this scene from **The Cat from Outer Space**. Walt Disney Productions—World rights reserved.



ster that must be destroyed before he kills everyone.

Lily Tomlin has been signed by Universal to produce and star in **The Incredible Shrinking Woman**, based on Richard Matheson's classic novel, **The Incredible Shrinking Man** (filmed by the same company in 1957). Jane Wagner will do the screenplay.

In 1956, an excellent psychological SF thriller was released under its novel title, **Invasion of the Body Snatchers**. This is currently being remade by producer Robert Solo and director Philip Kaufman for United Artists. W. D. Richter has based the script on Jack Finney's book, which tells about an invasion of Earth by intelligent seedpods from another galaxy. The creatures take on human form and infiltrate our society, spreading out everywhere and killing the folks

(Continued on page 58)

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NBC'S NEWEST: QUARK AND PROJECT U.F.O.

■ In 1977, a half-hour science-fiction comedy pilot was aired on NBC-TV. The name of this funny spoof was **Quark**, and it starred Richard Benjamin as the captain of an intergalactic garbage ship. His mission, as an officer in the United Galaxy Sanitation Patrol, is to snag enormous space baggies and transport them to some unspecified destination. Adam Quark's interesting-looking vessel comes complete with a pair of metal claws (arms?) and a scoop (a mouth?) that open up in front to receive the neatly-packed loads. Whenever this happens, one gets the distinct impression that the craft is some sort of living entity that is gobbling up the waste material.

Quark is by no means alone on his weird vessel. In the pilot film, and beyond, he was accompanied by Gene/Jean (Timothy Thomerson), a transmute who is, in essence, a true hermaphrodite. Thanks to a special form of futuristic surgery, chief engineer Gene/Jean (as his name tag shows) has a complete set of male and female chromosomes. As a result, his personality and voice periodically lapse between aggressive male and very delicate female. Quark, for one, has a difficult time getting used to this quirk.

By Tom Rogers

The success of **Star Wars** and **Close Encounters** have had an impact on the programming executives of NBC-TV. **Quark**, a science-fiction series spoofing the genre, stars Richard Benjamin as the leader of an intergalactic garbage crew. **Project U.F.O.** is an anthology series covering actual U.F.O. sightings and alien encounters.

The two Bettys are also part of the crew. One of these is a clone (an exact duplicate, formed from a single cell of the other), and one is the original, but only they know which is which. Each one insists that she is the authentic model, and they are both in love with their commander. While he attempts to ignore their obvious advances, he enjoys having them around — particularly since they made themselves new (and very skimpy) outfits. Tricia and Cyb Barbstable, the actresses who are cast in these roles, are actual twins. Oh, yes —

they also think almost exactly alike on the show, although they frequently argue over differences of opinion (you figure it out), and often say the same things in unison. Confusing, but fun.

O. B. Mudd (Douglas V. Fowley), who was dropped after the opening episode, was the vessel's research and equipment specialist. He somewhat resembled an old space pirate because of the eyepatch he wore, and was little help whenever an emergency occurred. According to the first show, he (carelessly) built Andy the robot, but the series credits Quark with this accomplishment now.

Andy is the funniest character on the program. He is a servo-mechanical coward that comes equipped with a silly voice. Whenever any sort of danger threatens, he tries to find safety; if necessary, he even finks on his creator in order to save his metal skin. In addition, he seems to come complete with a sex drive. The pilot showed him temporarily "in love" with a piece of the ship's machinery, and another adventure introduced his absurd-looking "girlfriend." Along the way,



Adam Quark has a hard time trying to figure out which Betty is the original, and which one is the clone.

it was also revealed that he has a "thing" for the Bettys. While Andy doesn't talk much, his lines tend to be the best in this situation comedy. Bobby Porter, who is 4'10", plays both Andy and Dink, the hairy Gravelite resident of space station Perma One.

Ficus, the vegeon (Richard Keltan), was not around until the second episode. He is an intelligent vegetable in human form, who lacks both interior organs and emotions. Until the age of 18, he grew out of the ground; then his roots were snipped, and he began walking around. Upon graduating from the Space Academy, he was assigned to Quark's ship as its science officer. He is a deliberate copy of **Star**

Although both programs have attracted loyal followings among science-fiction fans, recent ratings indicate that the future for these shows includes quick cancellations.

Trek's Mr. Spock, and often gets into very humorous discussions with his commander.

Another character that was dropped after the opener is Ergo, the craft's mascot. This 10-pound blob of protoplasm was Quark's pet, but the critter constantly attempted to eat his master. Adam, naive and uncoordinated as he is, got into a hilarious bout with the hungry beast, and the thing kept jumping on him from across the room. Since the nasty thing isn't around anymore, I imagine that Quark smartened up and decided that this kind of affection wasn't worth it.

Outside of the starship, there are: Palindrome (Conrad Janis) — Quark's treacherous superior, The Head (Alan Caillou) — the secretary-general, who is all dome (hat size 36) and an assortment of other oddball aliens.

Quark is an intentional spoof of all science-fiction movies and TV shows. There is a lot of **Star Trek** present, and the hour-long series opener parodied **Star Wars**. Every week (unless there is a two-parter) the heroes save the universe from some peril. The half-hour pilot re-



Richard Benjamin as Quark, Tricia and Cyb Barrettable as the Bettys, and Douglas V.

Fowler as O.B. Mudd in this scene from the pilot episode



vealed how they dispersed a deadly enzyme cloud that threatened to metabolize everything it touched into instant space jelly. Since Quark and his crew are considered to be highly expendable, they were sacrificed to stop the menace. However, Andy accidentally saved the day — as well as the ship and everyone on it. Incidentally, Buck Henry, the program's writer/producer, appeared briefly in this episode as an intergalactic V.I.P.

"May the Source Be With You" was originally filmed as a two-parter, but it was aired in an hour-long time slot in order to start the

season right. The "Source," of course, replaced the "Force" of **Star Wars**, and came complete with Hans Conruid's comic voice. Unlike the essence it was copied from, the "Source" was a sentient entity that often made mistakes. It was used against the dreaded Gorgons (or "Gorgies" as they are often referred to), who had sent an enormous space station to conquer the United Galaxy [the design, by the way, closely resembled Darth Vader's helmet]. As one might expect, The Head assigned Adam the task of stopping these ultra-powerful foes. Reluctantly, he and his fear-

Noted actor Richard Benjamin stars as Adam Quark, in the NBC television series.

ful crew boarded the enemy vessel and emerged victorious.

After the Source was safely packed away again, Quark was given a pleasant mission: secure a peace treaty by having an extended romance with a sensuous space queen. Unfortunately, he contracted a strange virus along the way, and began aging at a rapid rate. Despite Ficus's attempts to halt the process, his captain continued to age until his mystical interlude with Princess Carra (Barbara Rhoades).

William Jordan and Caskey Swann star in NBC's **Project U.F.O.** ▶

A rapidly aging Quark meets a highly seductive alien. ▼



Somehow, their frenzied union returned him to normal. This episode entitled "The Old and the Beautiful," was naturally very reminiscent of **Star Trek's** "The Deadly Years."

During the following week, in "The Good, the Bad, and the Ficus," our heroes' starship was pulled into a black hole that sucked their evil "parallel universe" counterparts into our cosmos. The villains went around zapping spaceships instead of picking up garbage, until both vessels confronted each other. Quick thinking on the good Quark's part thrust the troublemakers back into their own galaxy. As in **Trek's** "Mirror, Mirror," both good and evil versions of Ficus remained essentially the same. This also spoofed "The Enemy Within," in which Kirk was split into two opposite selves.

As of this writing, the most recent episode aired was a farcical version of **Trek's** "Shore Leave." In "Goodbye, Polumbus," Quark and company were sent to a planet from which nobody ever returned. Beaming down in a manner similar to the Enterprise's transporter, they soon encountered illusions based upon



A meeting of intergalactic VIP's, from **Quark**.
[Note Buck Henry at right end.] ▶

their individual fantasies; the Bettys each got a fake Quark, Ficus found a female human teacher (remember Spock's mother, Amanda?) who spoke in brilliant technical terms; Gene/Jean got to help his childhood super-hero against intergalactic baddies; and Adam found what he thought was his lost love. Eventually, the commander located a Gorgon device that had been devised to trap their foes by giving them a taste of paradise. This glowing instrument was "just past the (Gene) Roddenberry bush," and Quark nearly decided against destroying it. When he did, the female of his dreams was transformed into a clay woman. [For the benefit of anyone who might not be aware of it, **Goodbye, Columbus** was Richard Benjamin's claim to fame in the motion-picture industry.]

Scripts, special effects, model-work, humor, and characterization are all better than average in Columbia TV's **Quark**. It is definitely superior to most science-fiction TV shows of late, and its satirical approach makes for a thoroughly enjoyable production. The players were well chosen, particularly the star, and they interact well together. Hopefully, the program will last for a long while.

Another new entry on NBC is Worldvision's **Project U.F.O.** Actually, this isn't really a science-fiction effort. Rather, it is a weekly anthology series that dramatizes true (?) accounts of U.F.O. sightings. Undoubtedly, this was inspired by Columbia's **Close Encounters of the Third Kind**, and the approach is somewhat similar. The show has two continuing characters who are



This is the secretary general of the United Galaxy whose hat size must be at least 36.

Richard Benjamin as Quark, is seated at the controls of his intergalactic garbage ship.



supposedly the entire Air Force team for "Project: Blue Book." These are: Major Jake Gatlin (William Jordan), who sounds and acts a little like Jack Webb (the series producer) did in **Dragnet**, and Staff Sergeant Harry Fitz (Caskey Swain), who looks and sounds disturbingly like Jon Voight in **Midnight Cowboy**. These guys go around the United States, investigating reports of unidentified

(Continued on page 58)

A PREVIEW OF METEOR

By Doug Murray

■ **The Poseidon Adventure, Earthquake, The Towering Inferno**, names to conjure with—multimillion-dollar disaster movies. No, not movies that **were** a disaster, movies **about** a disaster.

Disaster films flourished as a genre in the mid-seventies; every film company got into the act and nearly every major motion-picture star was muscled, menaced or outright killed by some extraordinary trick of nature

Meteor, a multimillion-dollar disaster movie, is racing toward movie screens around the country. As mankind's final hour approaches, superstars like Sean Connery, Natalie Wood, Henry Fonda and Martin Landau are on hand to face eventual doom and the destruction of the world.

or man. But as the decade has ebbed, so has the popularity of the genre. Now though, American International Pictures is preparing to revive the multimillion-dollar disaster epic with their biggest picture ever: **Meteor**, a 16-million-dollar production, has finished filming and is in the last stages of special-effects work. **Meteor** may well be the ultimate disaster film to date.

In **Earthquake** only Los Angeles was at risk. In **Poseidon** and **Towering Inferno** only a limited (though

large) number of people were in danger. In **Meteor** it's the whole world.

The basic premise of **Meteor** is simple. Every day the earth, in its orbit, encounters several tons of space junk and debris, most of it

Sean Connery portrays Dr. Bradley, top U.S. space scientist, who has five days to develop a plan that will stop a shower of meteorites from destroying the earth.



A complete, subterranean space activities control room with all its complicated electronic equipment is the scene of a large part of the action in American International's **Meteor**.



Lovely Natalie Wood is a Soviet astrophysicist who is sent to the U.S. by her government in an attempt to stop the destruction of Earth by a shower of meteorites.



Sean Connery is the U.S. scientist who convinces Natalie Wood, as one of the Soviet astrophysicists, that the two nations must join forces to prevent the destruction of our planet.

microscopic, and all of it harmless. Occasionally, a larger piece is encountered and we see a meteor, a "falling star" in the night sky. Very rarely, a piece of very large junk meets the atmosphere and makes it all the way to the ground. Occasionally, in the last few billion years, this piece has been large enough to leave an appreciable crater—most recently the Trans-Siberian strike of 1912—a strike which created a crater roughly seven miles across and nearly 500 feet deep.

In **Meteor** one of these rare, large chunks is moving toward Earth's



After a meteorite destroys the command center in New York City, Sean Connery (as Dr. Bradley) and Karl Malden (as NASA chief Harold Sherwood) climb out of the rubble to look for other survivors in the upcoming \$18-million production of **Meteor**.

orbit—but this is a **very** large chunk, a rock large enough to literally destroy the earth. As it spins towards us, it begins to splinter from the interaction of the earth's and the sun's gravity. Pieces fly off, pieces that impact on the earth, causing widespread damage. New York City is struck, nearly destroying Manhattan, and killing millions; a tidal wave caused by a splinter striking the sea decimates the port of Hong Kong. Huge avalanches cascade down the Alps—the world is in turmoil, but the worst is yet to come. Unless the combined scientific minds of the world can come up with a solution, the main



Brian Keith, Natalie Wood, Karl Malden, Sean Connery and Bo Brundin watch helplessly as the massive meteor continues on its collision course with Earth.

body will strike Earth and the resulting cataclysm will make all that's gone before look like child's play. Eventually, American and Russian space technology, and the space shuttle, lead to a possible solution, but there is little time and a great deal to do.

Meteor, like the other disaster films that preceded it, has an all-star cast. Sean Connery, Natalie Wood, Karl Malden, Trevor Howard, Brian Keith, Henry Fonda, Martin Landau and a host of others are on hand to try to prevent mankind's final hour. Director Ronald Neame is

(Continued on page 66)

Secret Air Force report admits the threat is real.

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Ever since the first UFO sightings (shortly after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima) the government has been calling the UFOs a hoax. Yet all the time, Air Force intelligence was working frantically to discover where the UFOs were coming from!

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CAPTAIN NEMO:

1907- 1978



Nemo (Jose Ferrer) at the helm of the Nautilus.

Neither robot nor man, yet both: Tor serves aboard the submarine *Raven*, and is as evil as his commander, played by Burgess Meredith.



The adventures of Captain Nemo have captivated the imaginations of movie and TV fans for three-quarters of a century. The mad Captain Nemo and his crew have faced ray-gunned aliens, deadly giant squids and fierce enemy gunboats on their travels deep beneath the stormy seas.

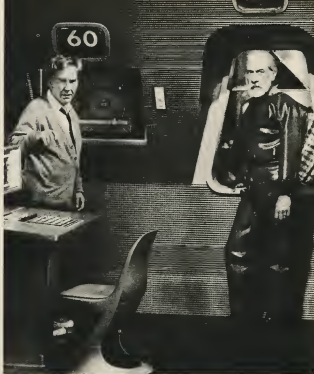
■ In the beginning, French fantasy writer Jules Verne wrote ***Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea***. This was followed up by ***The Mysterious Island***, which also featured the intriguing character of Captain Nemo. As most readers undoubtedly know, Nemo was a fictitious anti-hero, who had developed the world's first atomic submarine during the 19th century. Unfortunately, his genius was marred by the fact that he was rather mad; consequently, he decided to go around sinking warships, slave transports and munitions carriers. In the sequel, he was far more benevolent; then an old man, he helped some island castaways during the Civil War. His role in *Island* was a small one, and toward the conclusion he died of natural causes. By comparison with the introductory novel, the second book was very boring; there were no monsters, and there was little action.

It wasn't until 1907 that the first motion picture adaptation of ***Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*** was made by the French "father of special effects," George Méliès. The American remake, in 1916, was considerably longer, and it contained scenes of Nemo's origin in India. Thirteen years later, ***The Mysterious Island*** was released. In this loosely-based adaptation, the personage of Nemo is replaced by a "Count Dekker," who has built two submarines. Anyway, the nobleman goes searching for an underwater race of half-humans that resemble overgrown ducks. He locates the creatures, but a Russian agent captures Dekker and tortures him for his secrets. Meanwhile, his men are forced to submerge by an enemy gunboat, and consequently they encounter the mermen, dragons and a huge octopus. Upon returning to the surface, they discover that their leader is dying. However, his foes did not get the information they sought.

A Soviet version followed in 1941 (needless to say, this was quite different from the above), and this was more faithful to the novel.

Oddly enough, the 1950 American movie version of **The Mysterious Island** was a 15-part Columbia serial. In chapter one, several men escape from a Confederate prisoner of war camp in a hot air balloon. Captain Nemo (Leonard Penn) ends up rescuing the leader, and soon afterward a spaceship from Mercury arrives on the scene. Inside the craft are Rulu (Karen Randle), an attractive woman, and two masked males. They have come to Earth to mine uranium which they intend to use in their conquest of our world. Raygun-armed aliens, pirates and very unfriendly natives plague the good guys until the finale, at which time a defeated Rulu destroys the entire island after the heroes have escaped. This sort of storyline is typical for the Saturday morning serial crowd.

Walt Disney made the finest Captain Nemo flick to date. Released in 1954 under the title **20,000 Leagues Under the Sea**, it starred James Mason as Nemo, and Kirk Douglas as Ned Land, the harpooning hero. This 127-minute spectacular paralleled the book rather well, and superior script, acting and special effects have made



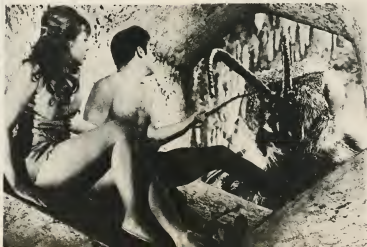
▲ Burgess Meredith (left) guest-stars as Professor Wally Dunningham and Jose Ferrer stars as Captain Nemo in Irwin Allen's production of **The Return of Captain Nemo** on CBS-TV.

◀ Captain Nemo, played by James Mason, is helplessly caught in the tentacles of the giant squid in **20,000 Leagues Under the Sea**.



▲ A giant crustacean attacks an unfortunate group of divers in **Mysterious Island**.

This giant bee menaces a pair of lovers in this scene from the feature version of **Mysterious Island**, with special effects done by Ray Harryhausen. ▼



the movie a classic. Lacking a heroine, the heroes are taken aboard the atomic-powered **Nautilus** early in the story. Their ship has just been rammed by Nemo's "sea monster," and the captain is anxious to move on to other targets. After sinking other vessels, encountering cannibals, formidable warships and a giant squid, the bottle-weary crew return to their secret island base. Almost immediately, though, enemy soldiers arrive and launch a surprise attack. Rather than allow his secrets to fall into the hands of unscrupulous warmongers, Nemo destroys the island and consigns his mechanical marvel to the depths. As the island disappears in the midst of an atomic explosion, the **Nautilus** sinks beneath the waves, and the good guys row away. Not only is this motion picture the best of its kind, but Mason's portrayal of the unbalanced mastermind is the finest to date.

The most exciting adaptation of **The Mysterious Island** was made by Columbia in 1960. With special

visual effects by stop-motion animation master Ray Harryhausen, the flick is a true delight for fantasy fans. Needless to say, this version bears little resemblance to the original novel. It begins like the source material, and shows how several Union soldiers escape from a Confederate prison in an observation balloon. After a severe storm, these men arrive at the title locale, where they are soon joined by two attractive women, who are the survivors of a shipwreck. Things start getting crazy now, when an enormous land crab attacks the group. They succeed in tapping the gargantuan from a cliff, but a little while later an oversized bird assaults the settlement. Unseen, Captain Nemo [Herbert Lom] shoots the thing and provides the grateful folks with an enormous meal. During ensuing segments, giant bees, a tremendous underwater crustacean and pirates cause severe problems for the protagonists. The cause of the gargantuan creatures is Nemo, who has been experimenting with a

Newly frozen enter the trapped Nautilus in this scene from *The Return of Captain Nemo*.

method of eliminating the planet's dwindling food supply. Ultimately, he dies and the island is obliterated by an erupting volcano. Naturally, the other men and women manage to escape harm.

Captain Nemo and the Underwater City (1969) was a fanciful, "untold tale" of our subject. Played by Robert Ryan this time around, the scientists reside in a beautiful metropolis called Tarpelmer, which exists beneath the waves. Here, the secret process that extracts oxygen from water also happens to turn rocks into gold, so trouble starts when some shipwreck victims arrive and become aware of the glittering element. To complicate matters, an outsize manta ray named Mobula periodically tries to eat the community. At the finale, the monster and the crooks are vanquished. Incidentally, the Nautilus looks like something out of **2001: A Space Odyssey** this time around.

Omar Sharif stars as the infamous seafarer in **The Mysterious Island of Captain Nemo** (1972). Reportedly done as a six-hour European TV movie, it was released to theaters in a 96-minute version. Little of Nemo is seen in this dull effort, which lacks fantasy elements. At the conclusion, the captain dies and his sub is burned by villains. Don't worry, though—they pay for their misdeeds. And, as usual, Nemo does not remain dead for long.

CBS-TV's recent entry, **The Return of Captain Nemo**, is the newest production in this category. The three-episode mini-series was designed as a pilot tryout for a proposed weekly program, but so far no decision has been made by the network brass. Producer/creator Irwin Allen, who often does a good job with special effects and miniatures, has an extremely bad reputation for producing kiddie shows that are totally lacking in plausible science fiction elements and intellectual content. Judging by the opening attempts for **The Return of Captain Nemo**, any subsequent series will follow its originator's general pattern. The effort, which is actually made up of three separate one-hour episodes, is typically juvenile and unrealistic. Although production values are fair, the subject matter, script, acting and sequence of events are extremely an-



Lynde Day George as Kate in *The Return of Captain Nemo*.



◀ Captain Nemo (Omar Sharif) navigates his submarine, the Nautilus, in Jules Verne's *The Mysterious Island of Captain Nemo*.

Jose Ferrer, who is held prisoner aboard the Raven, listens as Burgess Meredith outlines his plans for destroying Washington, D.C., in Irwin Allen's production of *The Return of Captain Nemo*.



noying. There is a considerable amount of action, but, as one might expect, there are no deaths. The same anti-social villain dominates all three shows, which makes it disturbingly similar to NBC's defunct *The Man from Atlantis* (although Meredith is better than Buono). It would seem that there are few underwater bad guys, as contrasted by the many land criminals that are thrown at the viewing audiences of so many other programs.

It took a total of seven writers to come up with **The Return of Cap-**

tain Nemo, and this was all tied together by one director, Alex March. Warner Bros. Television and Irwin Allen Productions jointly developed the trio of adventures, which were filmed entirely at the Burbank Studios in California. The cast is minimal, the sets are few (and naturally lack imagination), underwater sequences are poorly handled, camerawork is substandard, modelwork is okay, and special effects are fair. Submarine designs are somewhat similar to that of **Captain Nemo and the Underwater City**, but there are no con-



▲ Captain Nemo shows some allies a device that might be able to stop the Nautilus in the serial *Mysterious Island*.

ventional subs to offset the **avant-garde** structures. We only get to see the two main craft, the old-style Nautilus and the ultra-modern Raven [that of the bad guys]—both of which are atomic-powered and highly advanced.

The show begins in 1978, in the Pacific Ocean, during some U.S. Navy war games [that's when soldiers only make believe that they're killing people]. Two frogmen, who just happen to be members of a secret government agency, come upon the fabled Nautilus by chance. When they enter the vessel, they acci-



The giant squid attacks and snags Nemo in this scene from **20,000 Leagues Under the Sea**.

dently revive Captain Nemo (Jose Ferrer), who has been in suspended animation in liquid nitrogen for a century. The sleeper introduces himself and claims that he has been here ever since his ship became wedged beneath a dangerous shelf of coral. He then takes them on a tour of the unmanned (who knows why?) craft and mentions that advanced marvels are still operational. While his sub is furnished with trappings from the Victorian era, it is faster and sturdier than modern-day submarines. Powered by atomic energy, the Nautilus can dive deeper than any known vessel, fire a potent laser beam, and project an impenetrable forcefield. In addition, it comes complete with sophisticated computers and has the ability to create convincing visual replicas of itself (which are erroneously referred to as "clones"). When Nemo agrees to track down nefarious Professor Cunningham (Burgess Meredith) in exchange for a crew and repairs, he hunts down the Raven and boards it in order to find out just what his opponent is like [yes, dumb move]. In point of fact, this Nemo has two particular quirks:

(Continued on page 59)



A terrifying sound is heard, the source: a gigantic ant. Somewhere, there is a nest of these creatures. It must be found and destroyed before the queen ant can start a new colony. If these plants are left to multiply, it will be the end of the world, as we know it. **THEM** is the story of these raging killer insects on the loose.

A specially posed shot featuring Russ Wootch and James Aronson.

By Allan Asherman

■ The 1950s was a decade in which the key word was PARANOIA! Recovery from the traumas of World War Two, and involvement in the Korean War, were joined by "The Cold War," worry over the existence and availability of atomic weapons and political unrest. These conditions probably account for the large number of horror films produced during these years: the public, having a hard time, sought escape in entertainment. And what type of entertainment could be more natural than that which produces fear even more powerful than reality? Because of the added angle of the A Bomb, most of these horror movies were actually specialized science fiction thrillers that would create a terrible peril, and then destroy it before the startled eyes of the audience. One of the most respected of these efforts is **Them** (Warner Brothers, 1954).

The horror of **THEM** begins when Police Sergeant Ben Peterson and Officer Ed Blackburn discover a six-year-old girl wandering through their "beat," the New Mexican desert. Sergeant Peterson is not used to seeing people in this area, and determines that something is wrong. His suspicions are proven correct as he notices the girl's eyes are open, but she apparently is seeing nothing; she does not seem at all aware of her surroundings, and clutches at a tiny doll. She's apparently in a state of deep shock, and Peterson wants to know what put her there. When she proves completely unresponsive, eventually falling asleep from complete exhaustion, Peterson contacts a search plane and an investigation of the area begins.

Before long, the pilot reports his discovery of a car and trailer. Peterson and Blackburn determine this is where the little girl came from; they also discover that something terribly violent has happened there. There are no traces of the girl's parents. One side of the trailer has been completely caved in. There is wreckage strewn around, but robbery has not been the motive; nothing's missing. Besides, who could do such a thing?

At the site, strange tracks are discovered. The mysteries are mounting up, and Peterson wants answers quickly. He and Blackburn travel to one of the area's few businesses; a general store. They find the store has been completely destroyed. A well

Them Cast

SERGEANT BEN PETERSON . . . James Whitmore
DR. HAROLD MEDFORD . . . Edmund Gwenn
DR. PATRICIA MEDFORD . . . Joan Weldon
ROBERT GRAHAM . . . James Arness
BRIG. GENERAL D'BRIEN . . . Dinslow Stevens
MAJOR KIBBEE . . . Sean McClory
ED BLACKBURN . . . Chris Drake
A LITTLE GIRL . . . Sandy Descher
MRS. LODGE . . . Mary Ann Hokanson
CAPTAIN OF TROOPERS . . . Don Shelton
CROTTY . . . Fess Parker
JENSEN . . . Dlin Howlin
A POLICEMAN . . . John Berardino
A YOUNG BLONDE WOMAN . . . Mary Lou Holloway
MAN AT TELETYPE . . . Leonard Nimoy

Credits

PRODUCED BY . . . David Weisbart
DIRECTED BY . . . Gordon Douglas
SCREENPLAY BY . . . Ted Sherman
ADAPTED BY . . . Russell Hughes
STORY BY . . . George Worthing Yates
PHOTOGRAPHY BY . . . Sid Hickox, A.S.C.
ART DIRECTOR . . . Stanley Fleischer
FILM EDITOR . . . Thomas Reilly, A.C.E.
SOUND BY . . . Francis J. Scheid
MUSIC BY . . . Bronislaw Kaper
ORCHESTRATIONS BY . . . Robert Franklyn
MUSICAL DIRECTION BY . . . Ray Heindorf
SET DECORATOR . . . G. W. Berntsen
WARDROBE BY . . . Moss Mabry
POWDER AND EFFECTS BY . . . Ralph Ayres
PROP CONSTRUCTION BY . . . Dick Smith
MAKEUP ARTIST . . . Gordon Bau
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR . . . Russ Saunders

has been crashed in, just like the trailer's wall, but here there's a gruesome difference; this time the store owner is found dead. Nearby, Blackburn discovers the dead man's shotgun. Someone (or something) has bent the barrel completely around.

Leaving Blackburn behind to watch the place, Peterson returns the child to town. He has no way of knowing that as he is returning, Blackburn hears a strange, high-pitched screech. He's heard it before, recently, with his Sergeant; they had both thought it was the desert wind. They were wrong. As Blackburn thinks about the strange tracks found both at the trailer and the store, a black shadow approaches; Blackburn screams and fires his gun as the scene switches back to the city.

The wrecked trailer belonged to an FBI agent, on vacation with his family. For this reason, FBI agent Robert Graham is sent to New Mexico to investigate the crime. He

quickly becomes friendly with Peterson, and the two usually successful investigators become frustrated at failing to find any constructive leads. The most important clue has been the strange tracks; plaster casts of these prints were forwarded to Washington by agent Graham. Soon after, Graham receives word to expect the arrival of Doctors Harold and Pat Medford.

Dr. Harold Medford is an elderly scientist specializing in insects. Pat Medford is in reality "Patricia" Medford, the old scientist's daughter who is also a doctor and her father's assistant. As an attraction develops between FBI-man Graham and Patricia, Dr. Medford solves the riddle of what's responsible for the local crimewave.

Visiting the little girl, who is still in deep shock, Dr. Medford holds a small bottle to her face. As she smells the vapors, she begins to blink; then she screams out one word over and



▲ Dr. Patricia Medford gets too close for comfort to one of **Them**.

over...**Them!** The bottle, Dr. Medford reveals, is full of formic acid; the chemical given off by ants.

Medford, Peterson, Graham and Patricia return to the general store to hunt for additional clues. There, as Patricia is examining the terrain, a strange sound is heard by Peterson which he recognizes as the same noise he'd heard before. The source of the sound, a gigantic ant, comes over a sand dune. Only by firing repeatedly at the ant's antennae is it immobilized; only with concentrated machine-gun fire is it killed. Somewhere, Dr. Medford announces, there is a nest of these creatures. It must be found and destroyed before its queen ant can start a new colony. If these giant ants can multiply unchecked, it will be the end of the world as we know it.

Searching the area with helicop-

ters, Dr. Medford and the others discover the huge mound that tops the nest. The bones of human and animal victims of these monsters are scattered around the nest; Peterson recognizes the remains of his fellow officer, Blackburn.

Cyanide gas is dropped into the nest, and the area is also assaulted with flame-throwers. But Dr. Medford is worried; he is too old to go down into the nest, and yet it must be examined before it is destroyed. Patricia goes with Graham and Peterson. Outfitted with gasmasks, radios, photographic equipment and weapons, the trio is lowered into the gas-filled nest. Some of the giant ants have survived the gas; they are killed with machine-guns, flame-throwers and grenades. The central chamber of the nest is located, and after Patricia takes the necessary photographs, the place is destroyed.

Later, Dr. Medford examines the photos and announces that two queen ants, together with their male companions, have escaped from the nest; they must be found and destroyed immediately, or the world will be overrun with the giants. A massive search is started, and the element of secrecy is preserved for as long as possible to avoid panic.

An airplane pilot had spotted one

FBI agent Graham (James Arness) says farewell to his dying pal.



of the flying queen ants; but his report was disbelieved and he was confined in a mental institution. Visiting him, Graham and Patricia determine that the ants were headed toward the West Coast. Crotty, the pilot, is kept confined. "We'll tell you when he's well," Graham tells the head doctor of the place; secrecy must still be maintained.

The other queen ant is discovered to have flown into the open hatch of a

cargo ship. The eggs hatch at sea and the ship, overrun by the giant ants, desperately radios for help. But nothing can be done in time. Naval vessels arrive too late; all they can do is sink the ship, killing all the ants.

In Los Angeles, meanwhile, the search narrows. A railroad car loaded with sugar has been broken into; the sugar is gone. The ants are somewhere near. While following up another lead, Graham interviews an alcoholic confined in a hospital that overlooks "The River," an area of Los Angeles that is normally dry, until



large amounts of rainfall turn it into a riverbed so the water can be drained away into a giant network of adjoining sewers. "The River" is dry now; the alcoholic, by pure chance, comments he has seen "little airplanes" outside his window, but that they didn't seem large enough for the ANTS to get into. The "airplanes" were toys, flown in the vicinity by a father who had been discovered dead in his car near the sewer-drains, his arm torn off. His children are missing. Backtracking from the man's car, Graham and Peterson discover the entrance into which the kids probably ran to escape from the ants. The ants undoubtedly have their nest in the same tunnel.

Army units, complete with fully equipped men and trucks, launch a complete search of the vast drain system. Inside the tunnels, Peterson locates the missing children. While rescuing them, he is fatally injured. Graham, attempting to come to his

aid, is also almost killed; he arrives in time to see his friend Peterson die, seconds before the arrival of Dr. Medford. The Doctor confirms that the queen is still there, and that her eggs have not yet hatched; the threat will be over when this nest is destroyed. The soldiers move in, and begin shooting the ants and burning the large insects' bodies. The danger of "them" is ended, finally leaving Robert Graham and Patricia Medford free to pursue their romance.

Subordinate characters have been killed off in many horror movies, but

Fess Parker as "Crotty," an airplane pilot who has seen *Them*.

rarely have their deaths been such a surprise as James Whitmore's (Peterson) is in *Them* [it is almost as great a shock as when Janet Leigh's role goes down the drain in *Psycho*]. The realism is intensified because this death does not occur after the action is over with; we see the sense of loss felt by his friend, Graham. The film is also lent considerable credibility by the performance of Edmund Gwenn (Dr. Medford). He is not quite an "absent-minded professor," but he is certainly not without his eccentricities, and a capacity for coming up with some great lines in between action sequences [such as, "We may be witnesses to a biblical prophecy come true...," and "...Oh, no, we haven't seen the last of 'them,' we've just had a brief glimpse of what may be the beginning of the end of us"].



Inside the horrifying nest of giant ants.

The most important thing about **Them** is that it takes itself seriously. There is no comic relief in the entire film, except for a couple of moments involving Dr. Medford's ignorance of how to operate a two-way radio, and a confrontation with an alcoholic-ward inmate who wants to join the Army. These are things that add to the characterizations involved without interrupting the film's rhythm.

The film could never have succeeded if the ants did not appear realistic. No stop-motion was used here; every shot of the beasts was accomplished with full-scale mockups (although some of these are probably only "partials," consisting of head, shoulders and legs). No wires are visible on them; because of this, and because of their limited movements, it is doubtful they were marionettes. They appear to be operated by people hidden inside during the closeups, and by a "counterweight" system during the long shots. [With this technique, the "ants" would have been

hollow, lightweight mockups with bars emerging from the backs. These bars would be connected to central pivots, so that the creatures could rise and fall when this off-stage bar was manipulated.]

The ants are successful in the movie because they are usually seen in dimly lit areas (the nest and the sewers). The photography, the sound-effects and the film editing rendered them convincing to the audience, despite the fact that we never actually see one run across the screen in pursuit of anybody. To compensate for this, the ants were seen looming up behind or beside people.

Although **Them** is an excellent film which apparently enjoyed a high budget from Warner Brothers, the movie must have been a frustrating and uncertain project to work on. Reportedly, the movie was intended to be produced in color. On the first day of production, however, black-and-white film was discovered in the cameras. This was supposedly the first indication to the production crew that **Them** was to be in black-and-white.



Director Gordon Douglas (with microphone) sets up a climactic sequence for the film.

An excellent view of one of the full-sized ants constructed for **Them**.

Property man Dick Smith, who constructed the ants (not the same Dick Smith who is now a famous makeup artist), had apparently designed the "creatures" for color photography. He was most likely quite disappointed, but his creations probably photographed more convincingly in the stark black-and-whites provided by Director of Photography Sid Hickox.



▲ James Whitmore burns an ant's butt in the storm drains of Los Angeles.

▼ Ben Peterson (James Whitmore) seconds before his death in **Them**.



them might also have been slated for 3-D photography. The ants come directly out toward the camera during some scenes, and people sometimes shoot off guns and flamethrowers in the general direction of the audience. In one scene, Patricia Medford (Joan Waldon) takes pictures of the ants' desert nest using a 3-D camera. The film was released in 1954, just as the 3-D craze was dying out (other films, including Warner's 1954 Hitchcock film **Dial M for Murder**, were scheduled for the process, but were released in standard 2-D form).

To compensate for these inefficiencies, Warner Brothers gave **Them** what may have been the costliest publicity campaign for any film until that time. The words **Them is Coming, Them are Here** and just plain old **Them!** were stenciled on many streetcorners throughout large cities. Radio and television stations showed a large advertisement of 60-second trailers, shorter "teasers," and a 2½ minute filmclip (which was probably among the first issued for TV advertising campaigns; today, filmclips are regularly issued as part of a movie's publicity campaign).

Them may also have been responsible for starting the "secrecy" type of publicity campaign that is needed even more today because of increased competition between theatrical films and made-for-television (rushed into production) movies. A large portion of **Them** was photographed on location in the Mojave Desert. An especially isolated locale was purposely chosen so that area residents would not see the "ants" ahead of the film's release date. In fact, the secrecy was so great that before the film's release, few people knew its subject. Speculation at the time was that the movie concerned flying saucers, or was a story about human mutants (although the ants in **Them** were stated to be mutants, it is doubtful the script in any stage concerned human mutations as well). Cast and crew were forbidden to have conversations with Mojave townspeople, and the nearest town was 30 miles away from the location. Reporters were not allowed anywhere near the sets, and the film's staff could not divulge anything about the movie to the newspapermen who hung around the locations hoping for a "scoop." These precautions are extremely similar to those taken by Steven Spielberg on his recent sci-

(Continued on page 64)

FANTASY FILM MUSIC OF BERNARD HERRMANN

By Allan Asherman

A murder without music just doesn't make it in the mad world of motion pictures. And when it came to scoring fantasy thrillers Bernard Herrmann was the acknowledged master of the art.

■ Less than five years ago, a film fan entering a record shop knew that he would not find recordings of his favorite soundtracks, because the chances were that they had never been recorded for commercial sale. One composer in particular has always enjoyed a large fan following because of the beautifully weird film scores he wrote. But a visit to any shop in those days would have produced response of "sorry" "no such things" and "... but that's a very rare record."

Yet, some of Herrmann's fantasy music was recorded and sold for a short time, but even five years ago those albums were only legends to be looked for and not found, or found and just looked at because of their great worth. Only a few collectors had those few albums, and even they hunted through the shops in vain efforts to discover new albums bearing Bernard Herrmann's film scores.

Today, things are different. Because of the booms in nostalgia and in science fiction, fantasy and horror, a fan can walk into any record shop and find whole sections set aside for the music of Bernard Herrmann. It's like a dream for those of us who were collecting when all these existing albums were only dreams that could not be purchased.

The start of this great time for science fiction, fantasy and horror film fans took place largely thanks to Jim Whorowski, an appreciator of great film music who worked for Doubleday Publishing Company's Science Fiction Book Club. Jim conceived the idea of a specially produced album. It would have nothing but Herrmann's best known scores, would be available as a premium for people joining the Book Club, and might be marketed in stores. The few who knew of this album during its planning stages could not believe it would ever exist. It was just too good to be true, but thanks to the efforts of Whorowski, and the others involved in the project (including Doubleday and Bernard Herrmann himself), the album became a reality in 1974. It's called **Great Science Fiction Film Music** (London Phase Four; CSL-1001), and if you don't

(Please turn page)

Loud brass and powerful percussion provided the music of the Cyclops in *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad*.





belong to the Book Club you don't have to join to get it; anyone who's a member can order it for you.

Bernard Herrmann conducted the National Philharmonic Orchestra. The original sheet music seems to have been used, but there are some important changes. Herrmann has an incredible understanding of the orchestra, and what each instrument can do. In order to demonstrate the interaction of each instrument to create the finished effect of his music, he conducts the orchestra in a much slower series of tempos than he used in the actual soundtracks of the films. This does not lessen the effectiveness of the music at all. Unfortunately, the most important instrument used in the music of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (Fox, 1951) is the electronic "theramin" which has a unique, vibrating sound. This instrument is apparently a thing of the past; it is not present on this recording, and seems instead to have been replaced by some other electronic instrument with a more steady sound. The opening credit music suffers because of this. The music accompanying Gort's first destructive

behavior in the film is easily the weirdest theme in the movie's score. Because of the absence of the theramin, an instrument that sounds a great deal like a "kazoo" has been substituted. The rest of the film's music is extremely well treated, very beautiful and every bit as effective as in the original film. There is one important piece of music missing, the frenzied arrangement of the main theme played when Klaatu escapes from Walter Reed Hospital is not on the record.

The disc also has selections from *Psycho* (Paramount; 1960), but these are unimportant compared to the other two bands on the record, devoted to *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (Fox, 1959), and *Fahrenheit 451* (Universal; 1956). The *Fahrenheit* selections are superb, capturing the eerie flavor of the film and of Herrmann's music in general. The selections from *Journey* are a dream come true. It was rumored for years that a disc existed on this film, but it was never located. Perhaps Fox planned to issue such a record, but never did. This is a beautiful film, with a score even more vast than the film itself.

Talok, the bronze giant of *Jason and the Argonauts*, was accompanied by slow, majestic music.

Herryhausen's effects and Herrmann's music brought this scene to life in *The Mysterious Island*.

The music, in fact, helps to save portions of the film filmed on indoor sets that would not have worked without Herrmann's organ and harp music backed by a full orchestra to convince us that we are miles underground hearing echoes and re-echoes of melodies that say "WOW!"

Even the album's jacket makes it worth getting; it's a full color painting by special effects artist Jim Danforth, showing a montage of Klaatu, the *Psycho* house, flying men from *Fahrenheit* and a giant lizard with giant mushrooms from *Journey*.

The Fantasy Film World of Bernard Herrmann (London Phase Four; SP-44207) was issued shortly after the previous album became available. *Psycho* was replaced by a short trio of melodies from *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* (Columbia; 1958) that are not as impressive as Herrmann's original soundtrack for that film. The

rest of this album is identical to the Doubleday premium version. Its title demonstrates the prejudice directed at science fiction outside of S.F. circles (a prejudice that has seemed to die down as S.F. proved itself as a money-maker.) Except for *Sinbad*, all the selections on this album are science fiction, NOT fantasy. The cover of the album is a meaningless jumble of colors that have nothing to do with the subject matter.

The Mysterious Film World of Bernard Herrmann (London Phase Four; SPC-21137) followed a year later. This one could have been called "Some of Herrmann's Dynamation Film Scores"; its entire contents consists of selections from the music of *The Mysterious Island* (Columbia; 1961), a too-small bit of *Jason and the Argonauts* (Columbia; 1963), and virtually the entire score of *The Three Worlds of Gulliver* (Columbia; 1960). Herrmann and the National Philharmonic Orchestra might have recorded this music along with the selections included in the other London albums mentioned previously. The music is great, and the renditions are more than sufficiently dramatic and faithful to the original

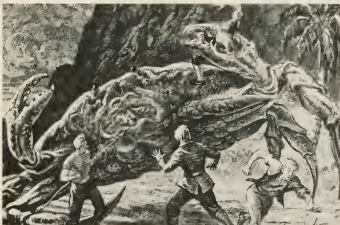


Special-effects artist Ray Harryhausen's depiction of a scene from *The Mysterious Island*. Herrmann's music here was spectacular and suspenseful.

chicken, but an actual prehistoric creature] was extremely ancient, then the theme composed for this creature should also be based upon styles of the past. The "Bird" music is therefore written in an 18th Century style.

The music for *Jason and the Argonauts* is extremely beautiful, reflecting drama, intrigue, myths and monsters. Unfortunately, the score to this film is the shortest series of selections on the album, and it is also the only *Jason* music that has ever been recorded on disc. The main "Talok" theme is missing, along with the skeleton fight (also based upon a classical selection), the "Harpies" music and all the themes composed for the scenes involving "The Gods." The opening music IS here, along with some "Talok" themes, and the "Triton" music.

Colpix Records had issued an album of *The Three Worlds of Gulliver* in 1960. This is now one of the rarest records ever pressed, together with Colpix's companion



scores. Once again Herrmann has slowed things down. This time, there are no exotic instruments missing from the original orchestrations, and the scores sound brilliant on this album. The *Mysterious Island* selections include all the film's important music except the end segments in which the island is destroyed and the people escape. You learn

a great deal about Herrmann, as you hear his sense of humor reflected in the music. "The Giant Bee" theme is based on the classical piece "The Flight of the Bumble Bee" (which radio and TV buffs will recognize as the theme for *The Green Hornet*). For the "Giant Bird" music, Herrmann reasoned that since the bird [which is NOT a giant



To show the prehistoric nature of this giant bird, composer Herrmann created a variation of a classical type of melody. ▲

Sinbad (Kerwin Matthews) fights the skeleton in **The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad**. (Columbia 1958) ▶

Gort's music in **The Day the Earth Stood Still** was prepared using theramins and a piano. ▼



album for **The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad**. The original album featured the film's complete soundtrack; music together with sound effects and speech. The quality was not that clear [it might even have been recorded in a theatre during a screening of the film], but the London Phase Four suite is BETTER than the way in which the music is used in the film. Herrmann's slower arrangements here make the "Brobingnagians" themes sound even more "giant" than they do in the film. The complete score, however, is mostly British folk-style music,

Today interest in film music is on the increase, and several of Herrmann's classic film scores are finally available to the public in record form. Here's your handy guide to what's currently available for the discriminating film music fan.



James Mason and Pat Boone get ready to hear some great music in **Journey to the Center of the Earth**. ▼



and it could easily have been incorporated into a British period-music album as one full side. This would have left more space to present the remainder of the music from **Jason and Mysterious**.

In addition to the super-rare Colpix album on **The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad**, and the poor-quality (and most likely pirated pressing of the disc that was on sale a couple of years ago), there is an excellent recording of this beautiful fantasy score available today. **The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad** (United Artists; UAS-29763) dates back to 1975.

The entire disc is devoted to this great score; over 34 minutes of music are there, including all the important pieces from the film. This is a modern repressing of the original 1958 Colpix album; it is not a reconstruction of the original score, it IS the original score, and it's well worth getting (especially since this is probably an album that will not be around for many more years; it's bound to become a collectors' item).

Everything is here, including the



The unearthly music of **The Day the Earth Stood Still** was not one of composer Bernard Herrmann's favorites. ▲

film's overture (opening credits); the longest band is "The Cyclops," which runs for over three minutes. The skeleton music is based upon the classical "Dance of the Skeletons," which Walt Disney had adapted years before for one of his "Silly Symphony" cartoons. Herrmann's music uses a xylophone to create the image of a "bundle of bones." Despite the lack of stereo, the quality of this record is great.

Moving several centuries along, we arrive at **The Devil and Daniel Webster**, the classic fantasy filmed

(Continued on page 60)

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stretched out over three- and four-month periods). In time, other companies—primarily Columbia and Republic—joined in, and for a while these quickie productions were extremely popular, especially with children. During the 1950s, though, trends and preference began to change; before long, the serials were a thing of the past. They became extinct, and can only be viewed now on rare occasions.

The science-fiction serials have served as an inspiration for many movies that followed. For example, George Lucas credits **Buck Rogers** and other titles as the forerunners of his magnificent **Star Wars**. While being rather poor on the whole—utterly fantastic and unscientific in content—the serials were

◀ Commando Cody, Sky Marshal of the Universe, stands ready to fight off uninvited foes.

a lot of fun, and still are. All of them were cheaply made, full of adventure and designed to entertain people who knew little about science.

The first of these hard-core SF gems was a 12-parter called **The Vanishing Shadow** (1934). A young genius was out to avenge his father's death, and during his fight against corrupt politicians he teamed up with a scientist who had already developed a number of wondrous devices. Among these were a robot, an android, a death-ray weapon, and an invisibility belt. Whenever the belt was used, the wearer disappeared before his shadow did; hence, the title. As often was the case in these epics, the villains frequently turned the heroes' hardware against the good guys. However, few defenders

Flash Gordon fights for his life in Ming's arena of death.



The science-fiction serials of the 1930s and 1940s

MATINEE SCI FI

by
Jason
Thomas

■ When the sound era came along during the late 1920s, movie serials began to flourish. At that time, only Universal and Mascot were producing efforts of this type [you know, the one-chapter-a-week movies that

Flash and Prince Baron are shown one of the Clay People's strange secrets.



The damsel in distress is menaced by Dr. Satan's robot.



of the faith ever bit the dust [unless it was a western], and everything always worked out for the best in the end.

The Lost City (1935) was even more ridiculous. Beginning with a series of severe electrical storms that wreaked havoc throughout the

Flash Gordon, The 'Underside Kingdom, Buck Rogers and Superman were all part of the special form of film known as serials.

The Flying Disc Man from Mars messes up some trouble or the heroes.





world, the hero soon traced the source of the disturbances—where else?—darkest Africa. There, he and his companions discovered a secret metropolis within "Magnetic Mountain," where the evil ones lurked. Zolok, the ruler, was the typical madman who was out to rule the world, and planned to do so with the help of his society's advanced technology. In addition to the storm-maker, the baddies were equipped with a giant zombie-maker, ray-guns and powerful explosives. Despite everything against them, the fellows from America triumphed over their

enemies when Zolok went mad and inadvertently blew up the Lost City. You win some, you lose some.

During that same year, cowboy singing star Gene Autry got into the SF act when he starred in the kiddie-oriented "classic," *The Phantom Empire*. Complete with another hidden civilization (20,000 feet underground this time) and more fantastic gadgetry, this story threw in a lot of comic relief. Not only were there a pair of buffoons tagging along with the hero, but a couple of kids played a prominent role, as well. Amazingly enough, Gene was actually

Shot, hm, handsome, and then we'll skip down together.

killed during this adventure. However, he was restored to life by one of the many incredible inventions that happened to be lying around Murania. There was the usual array of ray-guns, robots, etc., and as well, all of this was destroyed when a disintegrator cannon ran amuck and caused a cave-in.

The all-time best science-fiction serial was based on a comic strip that was immensely popular with readers of all ages. **Flash Gordon** excelled in special effects and a sense of wonder—for a serial, that is. Starring Buster Crabbe in the title role, chapter one started out by showing a runaway planet on a collision course with Earth. When Flash, Dr. Zerkov

Martian robot vs. Rocket Man.



The science fiction serials have served as an inspiration for many movies that followed. George Lucas credits **Buck Rogers** as the forerunner of his magnificent **Star Wars**.

Somehow, Rocket Man manages not to burn his legs off every time he flies.

Superman lies unconscious at the feet of the Black Widow.

and Dale Arden flew to Mongo in the scientist's untested rocketship, they were captured by soldiers of the sinister Emperor Ming (the Merciless) and separated from one another. After the "blond god" from our world defeated the monkeyman, a dragon, a lionman, hawkman, an octopus, sharkman, a horned orangapoid, a striped tigrion, a partridge in a pear tree (huh?) and other dastardly things, he saved Dale from a fate worse than death and helped his allies to overthrow the tyrant. [All in a day's work, I suppose.] However, not only were the good guys destined to travel to Mongo again, but seemingly-immortal Ming—like his obvious inspiration, Dr. Fu Manchu—menaced our sphere on two separate occasions in years to come.



He was a hard man to keep down, but so was our hero.

The Undersea Kingdom [1936] was vastly inferior to the above classic, but it had its moments, thanks to hero Ray "Crash" Corrigan and villain (played by Lon Chaney, Jr.). Thanks to a rocket-powered submarine, Corrigan and his companions managed to accidentally locate Atlantis, which happened to be in an underwater cavern and resembled an area above the water. There were sky, trees, people, horses, and all sorts of earthly paraphernalia, all of which, in their undersea existence,

went against scientific possibility. The opponents of Atlantis were the evil residents of another city beneath the sea, and these guys were out to conquer both their opponents and the surface world (that's us, natch). Amidst robots, atomic death-rays, souped-up tanks and weird flying machines, the American heroes alone survived the ultimate holocaust that destroyed the hidden world.

"Guess who" returned in **Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars** [1938]. This time around, Flash and com-

(Continued on page 63)



The science-fiction serials of the 1930s and 1940s are warmly remembered by present day adults who grew up on the fantastic cliff-hanger stories and far-out special effects.

Leonard Nimoy (with the box) plays a Martian (emerging from spaceship).



DR. WHO COMES TO AMERICA



Jetting towards the United States is England's longest-running science-fiction television series, **Doctor Who**. There are 72 episodes filled with monsters, intelligent aliens and an array of fantastic special-effects.

By Tom Rogers

■ The longest-running science-fiction series on TV in England is a kiddie-oriented production called **Doctor Who**. Like most popular media characters, this hero is well-known throughout the world. His program is syndicated in a number of countries, and there are books, toys and other merchandise in abundance. In addition, there have

A strange, demonic alien confronts Dr. Who.



been two specially-made British motion pictures starring Peter Cushing as the intrepid Time Lord. The first of these is **Dr. Who and the Daleks** (1965), and the sequel is called **Daleks' Invasion Earth: 2150 A.D.** (1966). Needless to say, these theatrical releases are very juvenile, and both contain the same arch-enemies: the Daleks.

Our hero first appeared on BBC-TV about 13 years ago and has been going strong ever since. At that time, he appeared as an old man in his sixties (played by William Hartnell), and he was accompanied by a woman — Susan — who referred to him as her grandfather. While lacking traditional superpowers, he had two things going for him: he was a near-eternal Time Lord and he had a "Tardis." First of all, the Time Lords are a highly advanced extraterrestrial race that have the ability to travel through time and space. They can also regenerate their bodies whenever illness or old

Here then, in our never-ending quest to please, is a complete guide to **Doctor Who**. Watch for it in your neighborhood real soon!

age endangers them. A Tardis, which stands for Time and Relative Dimensions in Space, looks like an obsolete British police call box, but it can bend time and space with little effort. On the outside, it appears as though only one person can fit into it, but it is much larger on the inside. This peculiarity is sometimes referred to as being "dimensionally transcendental." In any event, the bad thing about the Tardis is that it is occasionally erratic, in that it can deposit its passengers where they might not want to be.

Whenever the program is about to get a new actor to play the part of the title hero, the regenerative power of the Time Lords is called upon. This was first used during an episode with the ruthless Cybermen. Doctor Who stated that his body was beginning to wear out, then he went into a coma and was transformed into a younger man. The changeling (now Patrick Troughton) not only looked much different, but his personality was also altered. He was completely different, except for his brilliant mind and memories. Later



the High Court found him guilty. However, his moving argument got him a light sentence: exile on our world for an indefinite period. As part of his punishment, they caused another change in his form (now played by Jon Pertwee), and his personality naturally altered, as well. Additionally, the trial caused the Time Lords to change their minds about helping others. From then on, they took an active part in the defense of the universe.

As a result, Who's superiors caused a severe problem when he was confronted by Omega, an evil Time Lord. In order for the hero to deal with this powerful opponent, his race lifted his previous selves from

Dr. Who (Peter Cushing) plots strategy against the evil Daleks in this scene from "Dr. Who and the Daleks."



A Silurian scientist approaches in a suspense-filled scene from "Dr. Who and the Silurians." Jon Pertwee stars as Dr. Who. ►

on, during a fight against the War Lords, he found it necessary to ask his race for aid. It was at this time that viewers learned more about their hero.

It was the practice of Time Lords to observe the affairs of other worlds, but never to interfere in what they deemed Fate (much like Marvel Comics' **Watcher**). Naturally, Who disagreed with this attitude, and he was therefore a renegade to his people. He believed that it was essential for all good beings to fight against injustice, and in order to do so he stole the Tardis and eventually journeyed to 20th century Earth. When the War Lords were defeated, Who was placed on trial for treason. Although his defense was brilliant,





▲ The newest reincarnation of Dr. Who faces capture at the hands of an alien.

▼ One of the many alien enemies of Dr. Who.



their respective time streams so that all three existed at the same time. Quite unexpectedly, the conflicting personalities began arguing, although this did not prevent them from overcoming their foe, it caused a great deal of aggravation and torment for all involved. This incident caused the Time Lords to release Who from exile, and he took to outer space once again.

During an eventual battle with a race of giant spiders, our hero was afflicted with a deadly alien radiation. He transformed himself into his youngest reincarnation [Tom Baker].

lethal gas, and their metal arms were sufficient to handle their special machinery. Looking like robots, they grew to hate all normal lifeforms, and they vowed to wipe out all such life in the cosmos. Although Who defeated them on their homeworld, they turned up in many more places, during various time periods. Once, for example, they conquered most of our world. While this story was covered during the TV series, it was redone as **Daleks' Invasion Earth: 2150 A.D.** At the conclusion, our eternal hero succeeded in destroying all of his opponents, but there were still others throughout the universe that had to be dealt with.

Thanks to Time Life Television, certain people in the United States have been able to follow the adventures of the third Dr. Who. Not long ago, the company acquired the rights to release 13 serialized stories; this amounted to 72 weekly episodes, filled with monsters, intelligent aliens and an array of special effects. Since this is a syndicate series, it is not available in all parts of the country, so if you are interested in seeing it, but are in an area that is not airing the program, contact your local stations and ask that they put it on. It might prove to be most intriguing.

The rest of this article will deal with the adventures that are available on this side of the ocean. Predictably, I will be sure not to give away any endings, because that wouldn't be fair. According to reports, Time-Life is doing pretty well with this package, and there is a good chance that they will obtain more adventures. Watch for them.

Ambassadors of Death (seven chapters). A rocket returns from Mars, but the astronauts are not aboard it. To solve this mystery, Who makes a solo flight into space, boards a huge alien ship, and learns of a plot to start an intergalactic war.

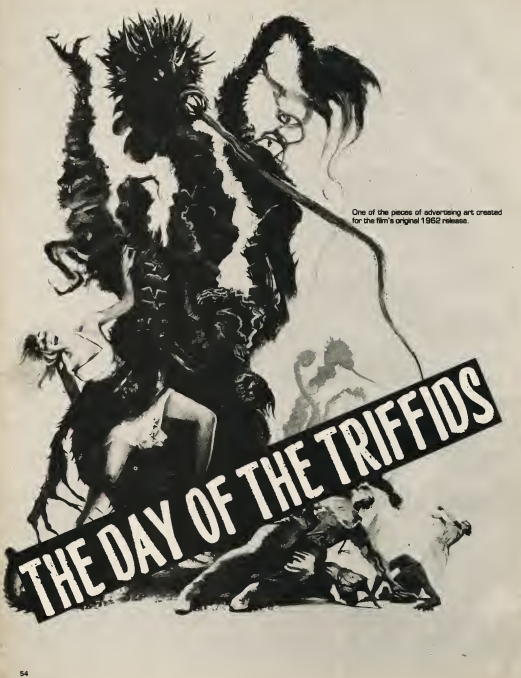
Claws of Axos (four chapters). An extraterrestrial spaceship lands on Earth, and its crew of beautiful golden humanoids declare themselves to be friendly. However, Who learns that they are all organically grown parts of the craft itself, which is a living creature called Axos. Its nutrient has been exhausted, and it will remain on our world until its systems have been replenished by

and this is the one that still exists today. He continues to battle evil throughout the galaxy, but now he does it as a more congenial person.

Needless to say, Peter Cushing looks very different from the actors who were cast as Dr. Who on television. Nonetheless, he acquired Tardis for two theatrical adventures that achieved considerable success throughout the world. In **Dr. Who and the Daleks**, he landed on a distant planet and helped the blond, fair-skinned Thals to defeat their merciless enemies. This story, which was based on the very first Who adventure, explained how an atomic war had created the Daleks. Having formerly co-existed with the Thals, the Daleks built mobile metal casings to shield them from radiation. Through the centuries, they degenerated into a grotesque, mutated species that could not exist outside of the artificial housings. They rolled on wheels, were able to fire a

◀ A Dalek captures Dr. Who.

(Continued on page 62)



One of the pieces of advertising art created for the film's original 1962 release.

THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS

The Day of the Triffide

Cast —

Bill Meen	Howard Keel
Christine Durrant	Nicole Maurey
Karen Goodwin	Janette Scott
Tom Goodwin	Kieron Moore
Professor Coker	Mervyn Johns
Susan	Jerina Faye
Miss Coker	Alison Leggatt
Doctor Soames	Ewan Roberts
Nurse Jamieson	Colette Wilde
Bettine	Carole Ann Ford
Luie de la Vega	Geoffrey Matthews
Teresa de la Vega	Gilgi Hauser
Mery	Katya Douglas
Poirot	Victor Brooks
Burly Men	Thomas Gallagher
Ticket Agent	Sidney Vivian
Pilot	Gary Hope
Blind Men	John Simpson

Production Credits

Executive Producer	Philip Yordan
Produced By	George Pitcher
Directed By	Steve Sekely
Screenplay By	Philip Yordan
Director of Photography	Ted Moore
Special Effects Photography	Wally Veevers
Art Direction	Cedric Dawe
Production Manager	George Fowler
Location Director	Bill Lawthwaite
Camera Operator	John Winbolt
Supervising Editor	Spencer Reeve
Music Composed and Conducted By	Ron Goodwin
Additional Music Composed and Directed By	Johnny Douglas
Continuity	Pamela Davies
Assistant Director	Douglas Hermes
Sound Editor	Matt McCarthy
Sound Recordists	Bert Ross, Maurice Askew
Make-Up	Paul Rabiger
Hairdresser	Eileen Warwick
Wardrobe	Bridget Sellers

By Allan Asherman

Brilliant meteor showers take place throughout the world, carrying a new species of plant to Earth in the form of seedlings. The deadly plants take root and the fun begins in the horror film **The Day of the Triffids**.

■ In 1951, Doubleday Books published one of the most terrifying science-fiction novels ever written; John Wyndham's **The Day of the Triffids**. The book had previously been printed in a condensed form in **Collier's Magazine**, where it had captured the imagination of the public. Surprisingly, during the 1950s when so many science-fiction films of all types and budgets were being produced, no studio ever tried to do a movie version of **Triffids**. In 1961, work was begun on this long-awaited film version; it was produced in Great Britain and released in the United States by Allied Artists. This was a surprising choice of studios, for up until that time, Allied Artists was noted for its economy-minded films (although it had released the much respected movie **The Invasion of the Body Snatchers**, based upon Jack Finney's novel, in 1956). The movie retains the drama of the book, and is treated as a spectacle, handled economically but spectacularly.

As the film opens, we see a brilliant meteor shower taking place in London, England. The phenomenon is occurring all over the world, and it has happened before to a limited extent. When the showers first started, they transported a new species of plant to Earth in the form of seedlings. Classified scientifically as "Triffids Celestus," the plants have taken root and are growing all over the world. This new meteor shower, though, does something to them; it "activates" them into growing to their full potential. As one greenhouse keeper in London eats a late sandwich and enjoys watching the spectacular meteor display, a Triffid in the greenhouse slowly uproots itself into a mobile, flesh-hunting form. Silently, it stalks near to the oblivious man. Suddenly the tables are turned; the man becomes the meal instead of the



► Scientist Karen Goodwin (Janette Scott) screams as a Triffid attacks her.



▲ On the rocks by her lighthouse, Karen Goodwin (Janette Scott) sees a Triffid for the first time.

estar, as the Triffid sprays its poison into his face.

Apparently the Triffid in the greenhouse was activated before the others because of the transparent nature of its enclosure; it was able to absorb a great portion of the mutating radiations from the meteor shower. The rest of the world will have to wait for a short time before they learn how terrible the Triffids' actually are. Unfortunately, these plants are not the only terrifying things around.

All over the world, people who have watched the spectacular meteor display are struck blind; a delayed reaction to the same radiations that gave "life" to the Triffids.

In a London hospital, seaman Bill Masen is recovering from an eye

The blind Bettine (Carole Ann Ford) knows that death is near but is powerless to avoid the Triffids.

operation. Although he is bitter because he has missed the beautiful sight of the night before, he soon becomes frightened as he realizes the hospital has deviated from its normal routine. Where is everybody? Why hasn't anyone come to feed him, or take off the bandages? In desperation, Masen decides to remove the bandages himself. Cautiously, he opens his eyes, not wanting to shock his optic nerves. At first, he sees only a blur of bright light, but gradually his sight is restored completely to him; he is now one of a fortunate few, as he soon learns. Masen encounters some of the hospital medical staff,



▲ Bill Masen discovers the Triffids are vulnerable to fire.

◀ Using a gas-station hose as a flamethrower, Bill Masen fights off a horde of Triffids.

who tell him what's been going on. Everywhere Masen turns, people are groping their way about, attempting to stay on their feet, trying to avoid tripping over objects and people. People are panic-stricken; the blindness has come upon them suddenly, and few can cope with the terror. Masen realizes what their shock must be, since he had been dwelling upon the reality and effects of blindness during his own recovery. He decides to leave the hospital and learn how widespread this terrible plague actually is.

Meanwhile, in an isolated lighthouse off the coast of Cornwall, the husband-and-wife scientific team of Karen

and Tom Goodwin have also escaped blindness. Busy working on their scientific and personal problems, they did not watch the lights in the sky. Their radio now begins to bring horrible news; most of the world has been struck blind, and there is a new peril; the Triffids are thriving, multiplying and finding the blinded human beings to be easily accessible "plant food." Horrified, Karen and Tom begin to experiment to find a weapon that will destroy the Triffids.

Their research is actually a matter of life and death to them because Triffid seedlings have also landed on their small island, and are quickly maturing into mobile, flesh-hunting monsters.

Back in Britain, Bill Masen has gone to London's Marybone Station hoping to catch a train out of the city. He encounters large crowds of panic-

stricken people wherever he goes. At the station itself, he witnesses a frightening scene, a train engineer has been blinded before he was able to bring his train to a safe stop. The train speeds into the station, and crashes into the end of the line, killing many of those aboard.

As Masen wanders about trying to help in any way he can, he hears the voice of a terrified little girl, Susan, a schoolgirl journeying back to London by train the evening before, was asleep when the meteors fell. She can see, but because of this she is in great danger. Grabbed by a blind bully who she has innocently told that

(Continued on page 64)

Susan (Janne Faye) and Bill (Howard Keel) realize they're almost surrounded by Triffids.



NBC'S NEWEST: QUARK AND PROJECT U.F.O.

(Continued from page 23)

flying objects and trying to disprove them. Once each week, they come across something that might just turn out to be factual; however, the alleged witnesses are usually suspicious characters. Once, Gatlin himself admits to having seen a flying saucer before he was assigned to play these games. This particular sighting closely resembled and flew like the alien craft in **This Island Earth**.

What makes this effort occasionally worth watching are the scale model U.F.O.s and special effects. Each week, a new vehicle design is introduced. Quite often, these are accompanied by alien renditions, as well. The craft range from balls and ovals to insect-like contraptions, but the majority of them are merely bright lights. The extraterrestrials vary in appearance, as well, from fake-looking robot-sorts to short, pointy-eared terrors that glow in the dark and are impervious to bullets. Once in a while, a deliberate fraud is uncovered, like a flying saucer factory scam that the F.B.I. closes down. Nonetheless, the presentation infers that some U.F.O.s are real; it has to, or else the entire premise would fall apart.

The premiere (like **Quark**, it is a mid-season replacement) dealt with a number of sightings made in several Southern states on the same night. One of these — the one that authorities could not disprove — dealt with a landing. A solitary woman claimed to have seen this, and she stated that an inhabitant of the glowing vessel communicated with her. Due to the fact that she alone made the sighting, because she was old, and since she acted a bit strangely as a rule, her story was indeed shaky.

A little boy turned out to be the only witness to an unexplainable sighting in another episode. Adults in his town lied in saying that they had also seen the U.F.O., in order to make their community famous, but the truth was revealed at the conclusion. The alien involved turned out to be the most amazing to date. It was humanoid, wore a helmet, had a very large mouth, and spoke in male and female voices, alternately (a real version of **Quark's** Gene/Jean?). Alas, once again the witness was unreliable because of his age and family situation.

The most believable individual to date has been a Negro police officer with a fine record, who saw a round, NASA-type module take off from a secluded area during the daytime. With the craft were two beings in spacesuits, but the design was a little different from those of

our planet. Strange, but — true?

Recently, an episode was aired that dealt with a family whose farm was overrun by creatures that appeared soon after a glowing light appeared in the sky. Although these glowing beings were shot at — without any effect, they did not do any damage. They were, however, frightened off by a flashlight that appeared to affect their eyes. Nonetheless, no evidence was ever found to prove that this occurrence had really taken place.

The main problem with this series is that it is presented as an hour-long show each week. There is a great deal of investigation, character development, and so on, as well as a repetition of several key scenes throughout every show. Also, since it is an anthology, the audience cannot identify with the characters. The two continuing actors are straightforward, no-nonsense military men who never get into any real trouble, so we can't be concerned about them. Another drawback is that only one person (a jet interceptor pilot) has lost his life in the four weeks that **Project U.F.O.** has been on. While I don't like the idea of innocent people dying, I know of a lot of sightings that have supposedly caused deaths and disappearances. Furthermore, no stories thus far have dealt with people who claimed to have been taken aboard flying saucers. Let's live things up, Webb, or your show won't last long at all. ●

FUTURE FANTASY

(Continued from page 16)

they replace. Only a handful of people learn the terrible truth, but one by one they are possessed.

William Shatner's newest effort is Dimension Pictures' **Kingdom of the Spiders**, produced by Igo Kantor and Jeffrey M. Sneller and directed by John Cardoso. The screenplay, by Sneller, Alan Callow and Stephen Lodge, deals with an Arizona town that is overrun by intelligent tarantulas, no less. These nasty little devils are getting revenge for Man's continual disturbance of the world's ecological balance. Undoubtedly a gross film, its costars include Altonise Davis, Natasha Ryan, Liaux Dressler and Woody Strode.

The most recent science-fiction offering from producer Charles Band

is **Lesserblest**, starring Cheryl Smith, Gianni Russo, Roddy McDowall, Kim Milford and Keenan Wynn. Michael Ree is directing from a screenplay by

Upcoming highlights include a sequel to **The Omen** in which the Devil's son, now a teenager, resides in the White House. And we wondered about Tricia.

Frank Ray Perli and Frances Schecht. The show starts with some stop-motion animation by David Allan: a pair of alien creatures chasing another of their kind. The runaway is blasted, but the pursuers are forced to leave a lesser gun and a strange pendant behind as they seek to evade an airplane. These items are found by a local malcontent, who soon discovers the weapon's awesome power.

ers. He dons the medallion, which apparently contains the essence of the dead being, and is slowly transformed into the extraterrestrial. Eventually the fellow kills people and destroys buildings during a rampage of destruction. Law-enforcement agents are powerless against the maniac, and only one chance exists for him to be stopped.

Avco Embassy will be losing **The Manitou** on theaters this year. This offbeat occult drama begins with a woman who has a strange tumor. The growth increases in size every night, and when doctors plan on removing it, the thing moves. Later on, the Manitou, *Misquamacus*—an American Indian medicine man dead for 400 years—takes over the female's body and returns in mutated form to plague the world. The creature wants revenge against the white man, and his power is so great that

he can shake a skyscraper. William Girdler and Jon Cedar based their script on Graham Masterton's best-selling novel, and Girdler is producing and directing. Michael Ansara, Tony Curtis, Stella Stevens, Burgess Meredith, Ann Sothern and Susan Strasberg head the all-star cast.

MC and the Legend of Forever Snow is currently being filmed in Bavaria. Scripted by Joe Camp and Dick Baker (who is also directing), and produced by Ben Vaughn, it deals with a cat that has supernatural powers. An American writer, his daughter and their pet feline conduct research on psychic phenomena in a castle and experience a variety of unnatural events. The role of the cat—trained by Frank Inn (**Benji**)—will be played up.

From London comes **The Medusa Touch**, with Jack Gold directing and coproducing with Anna V. Coates. Herein, a man with incredibly powerful mental powers threatens the world. John Briley directs, and Richard Burton, Lino Ventura and Lee Remick star.

Meteor has begun lensing for American International, with George Mather handling special photographic effects. Produced by Arnold Orgolini and Ted Parvin, the movie is being directed by Ronald Neame. Sean Connery, Natalie Wood, Karl Malden, Henry Fonda and Donald Pleasance star in this feature about a comet that strikes a meteor, resulting in a shower of fragments that hurtle toward Earth; Manhattan lies in the path of one of the huge chunks. The U.S. and Russia join forces to use atomic missiles against the impending disaster, but will their efforts succeed? Nearly half of the 16-million-dollar budget is supposed to go toward special effects, and an educational TV series, which will utilize the space sequences, is being produced simultaneously.

American International might also be picking up **Prey**, an entry from England about an alien that journeys to our world in search of protein. Predictably, it soon finds out that the best form of nourishment its money can buy is packed in people—so it eats everybody. Producers Terry Marcel and David Wimbury used director Norman Warren for this \$86,000 effort that was written by Max Cuff. Barry Stokes, Sally Faulkner and Glory Annen star. A sequel, **Human Prey**, is already being planned.

Billy Crystal, Joan Prather, Alex

Rocco, Doris Roberts, Edward Ansa and Imogene Coca lead the cast in Avco Embassy's **Rabbit Test**, a humorous story about the world's first pregnant men. Joan Rivers, who is directing, cowrote the script with Jay Redick. Producer Edgar Rosenberg has okayed numerous comedy cameo appearances, and several actors play dual roles. By the way, the name of the company that is officially making the movie is called Laugh or Die Productions.

Walt Disney's **Return from Witch Mountain**, the sequel to **Escape to Witch Mountain**, is due out this spring. Starring Christopher Lee, Bette Davis, Kim Richards, Ike Eisenmann and Jack Soo, the movie is being directed by John Hough, from a screenplay by Malcolm Marmorstein. Nick Miller and Jerry Courtland are producing this tale about a couple of extraterrestrial children who spend some time in Pasadena in order to see what life is like in an Earth city. Unfortunately, villains discover the space kids and their supernatural powers, and the boy is captured. The bad guys are out to rule the world, and it looks as though they might succeed when they fit their captive with one of their mind-control devices. His sister teams up with some local kids, and they track their target to a nuclear processing plant. The two siblings must use their potent abilities against each other as time runs out for the metropolis.

Star Crash is a big-budget science-fiction effort from Europe that will soon be released by American International. It stars gorgeous Caroline Munro as Stella Star, a Barbie-type who rockets throughout the galaxy in search of adventure. Aided by a robot called Helle and a telekinetic humanoid named Akton, she embarks on a mission to save the life of a space prince. During her amazing travels, she battles alien amazons, gelatinous monster projections, savage troglodytes, skeleton robots and an enemy space-fleet. There are battles on hostile worlds and skirmishes deep in outer space. This might just turn out to be the SF hit of 1978.

Another sci-fi masterpiece of the 1950s is scheduled to be remade. Universal has acquired the rights to do **The Thing from Another World**, a tale about an intelligent vegetable from some other planet, which RKO originally filmed. Based on the novel *Who Goes There?*, by John W.

Campbell, Jr., the flick will now be produced by David Foster and Lawrence Turman. David Wiltsa will write the screenplay. The original monster, incidentally, was played by James Arness in his first movie role.

Dino de Laurentiis has also announced that he will shoot **Yeti Snowman**. This famous Films N.V. title is supposed to take place in the Himalayas, although location shooting is uncertain at this time. Luciano Vincenzoni has been chosen as producer, and David Goodman is scheduled to do the screenplay. I suspect that there is going to be a problem, though, because **Yeti—The Abominable Snowman** is an Italian/Japanese effort being lensed in the Himalayas. The subject matter is obvious, although an enormous robot snowbeast is supposedly being used on the set—sort of a King Kong. Frank Kramer is directing for producer Mario di Nardo.

Naturally, more than this is on the way. Stay tuned to these pages for details.

CAPTAIN NEMO: 1907-1978

(Continued from page 33)

he must face his foes, and he prefers not to kill; these character traits make him very different from the original concept. After fighting enemy robots in a **Star Wars**-like corridor, he uses his laser cannon to blast an atomic missile that is speeding toward Washington, D.C.

Chapter Two finds the captain on a mission to the Mindano Trench, where our country has been storing radioactive waste. Cunningham has already begun siphoning the material to recharge his dreaded craft, and he has also secreted a saboteur on board the Nautilus. After the good guys escape from an underwater mine field, they discover the villain in their midst. Nemo engages the rogue in a swordfight, which the former wins, and the evil scientist is duped into sealing up the trench.

In the final segment, the Nautilus makes its way to sunken Atlantis. Upon being trapped by a weird device, the crew is threatened by the unfriendly inhabitants of the ancient city. Predictably, Cunningham arrives and causes problems for his enemies as he seeks to learn the secrets of Nemo's vessel. As one might expect, the heroes prevail after a gun battle

with their opponent's robots. All is well at the conclusion, and the good guys sail for future adventures.

The quality of **The Return of Captain Nemo** varies. Episode one, which introduces the brilliant title character, is hard to swallow. There is absolutely no way that he could have achieved so many technological breakthroughs. Without a doubt, the entire production is presented tongue-in-cheek. Story number two is better than the first as far as plot and direction go, but Meredith's silly presence brings the effort down. While he is a fine actor at times, he tends to play his TV villains in the same manner: a la Batman's foe, the Penguin. No doubt, he realizes that these roles are unbelievable to begin with (here, for example, he is surrounded by robots all of the time), and he vents his frustration out in this manner. Lately, he has ended up in a number of low-caliber, fantasy-oriented productions (**Burnt Offerings**,

The Sentinel, and **The Menitou**), and it seems to be getting to him. Oscar winner Jose Ferrer, on the other hand, plays his part in a very straightforward manner. However, he comes across as overacting, while his supporting cast stands around looking foolish. How much can you do with a comic book role, especially when you're surrounded by incompetents?

Where was I? Oh, yeah—story number three is the worst one of all, with the typical lost civilization and its advanced citizens. Once again, Atlantis is found and lost, and who cares?

The fellow responsible for **The Return of Captain Nemo** is, of course, Irwin Allen. While he continues to churn out TV garbage, for the most part (he fares much better with theatrical releases like **The Poseidon Adventure** and **The Towering Inferno**), he does it with a bit of artistry. He works wonders with

limited budgets, and his movies are enhanced by the fact that he uses the art of storyboards. Few producers today use this time-consuming technique (Disney, United Artists for their James Bond series, and Ray Harryhausen are among this group), which has artists draw every major scene before they are filmed. The directors then make the film in accordance with this intricate pre-planning.

If **The Return of Captain Nemo** becomes a regular weekly series, it will probably be a lot better than Allen's other losers (**Lost in Space**, **Time Tunnel**, and **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea**, to name just a few). Obviously, the man realizes that children are a lot more sophisticated than they were 15 years ago (largely due to television), so he has upgraded his latest effort. Unfortunately, it lacks adult appeal in every way. ●

THE FANTASY FILM SCORES OF BERNARD HERRMANN

(Continued from page 44)

in 1945 (also released as **All That Money Can Buy**), in which the Devil himself makes an appearance in a New England courtroom to fight for the custody of a man's soul. In 1968, Pye Records released the British album called **Wellee Raiaes Kene and The Devil and Daniel Webster** (# TPLS-13010), which was imported to the U.S. and might still be available here in various record shops. (**Wellee Raiaes Kene** is a concert suite of music from the score of RKO's 1941 classic release **Citizen Kane**, a film conceived by Orson Welles.) If the Pye disc is gone around your area, or is too expensive, there is also a current album that has music from this fantasy film.

Music From the Great Film Classics (London Phase Four; SP-44144) only has approximately five minutes of **Daniel Webster** music, but it also contains music from the Gothic romance fantasy film **Jane Eyre**, some selections from **Citizen Kane**, and some fine music from another fantasy-tinged film **The Snows of Kilimanjaro**. The album features the London Philharmonic

Orchestra conducted by Herrmann.

The Classic Film Scores of Bernard Herrmann (RCA Red Seal; ARL-1-0707) debuted in 1974. Charles Gerhardt, conducting the National Philharmonic Orchestra in London, accomplishes the impossible on this disc, he interprets Herrmann's music as Herrmann could have done. (This is difficult because no man could take an orchestra consisting of normal, living musicians and compose the music that Herrmann wrote; it appeared to convert that human orchestra into a group of goblins, demons and timeless souls who have experienced the infinite dimensions of this Universe.) A 13½ minute selection from **Citizen Kane** is featured, along with some non-fantasy scores of Herrmann (although anything that man wrote sounds fantastic). **Hangover Square**, a drama/fantasy about a Jack-the-Ripper type mad pianist is also represented by the incredible piano concerto Herrmann composed for the movie (in the film, the mad pianist died as he played the concerto during a fire which destroyed the concert hall; as the walls collapsed, you could still hear him playing the powerful music). The underwater music of **Beneath the 12 Mile Reef** almost sounds like a score written for a film about outer space, and the strange sounds of **White Witch Doctor** also seem

to be originating from out-of-this-world.

Just as unfamiliar frames of reference can sound alien to us, especially frightening situations can seem very close to fantasy at times. Horror films can impress us as fantasy when their premises become too far-out to accept within the framework of our real world. This is especially true when Bernard Herrmann is the composer of the film's score.

Unfortunately, even Herrmann could not make **Twisted Nerve** into a classic. His music for the film sometimes sounds like his **Twilight Zone** scores, and due to this haunting quality, Polydon's soundtrack album (# 583-728) is a collector's item. If you can't find a copy at a fair price, you might have better luck with **The Film Music of Bernard Herrmann** (Cinema Records; LP-8006). The recording's technical quality is awful, but the music on it is worth getting in any condition. **Twisted Nerve** is combined with the piano concerto of **Hangover Square** (probably from the original soundtrack), and selections from the horror/mystery film **The Bride Wore Black**.

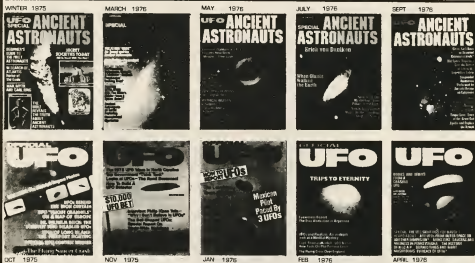
Sisters (Entr'Acte; ERG-7001 ST) is a fine quality recording of a great horror/mystery score by Herrmann. Strong depression, maniacal murder and deep mystery

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are all heard here. This album is still available, and should be gotten as soon as possible, along with the London Phase Four soundtrack album for **Obsession** (# SPC-21160). Both **Sisters** and **Obsession** are conducted by Herrmann, which is very fortunate; considering the complex musical "special effects" present in both scores, it is doubtful that anyone else could have produced interpretations of that magnitude. This stuff is even more eerie than the **Twilight Zone** scores of Herrmann.

Alfred Hitchcock is the master of the weird, the far-out. His films are usually combinations of mystery and horror, with strong overtones of fantasy and pure fright. The soundtrack for **Vertigo** is a rarity now, even though it was recently reissued in Japan. Some of **Vertigo** appears on the London Phase Four record **Music From the Great Movie Thrillers** (# SP-44126). Once again, Herrmann conducts the London Philharmonic Orchestra in a

delightful blend of horror that includes music from other of Herrmann's Hitchcock scores (**North By Northwest**, **Marnie**, a specially composed satirical portrait of Hitchcock, and a beautiful portion of the **Psycho** score).

Psycho is the most famous of Hitchcock's films, and it may also be the score for which Herrmann is best remembered. To compliment its black-and-white starkness, Herrmann composed music that used only string instruments. He produced irritatingly beautiful music; at times he made his melodies scream. Since the film was released in 1960, appreciators of great music and great films have hoped that Herrmann's score would be recorded eventually. That dream came true shortly before Herrmann's untimely death, when he conducted the National Philharmonic Orchestra for Unicorn Records' 1975 album [record number RHS-336]. The film's introduction, the horrible murders of Marion Crane and

Arbogast the detective are all here, along with Norman Bates' terrifying secret and all the assorted madness that occurs throughout the masterful movie.

Near Christmas, 1976, another gifted film music composer telephoned Bernard Herrmann. Herrmann's wife answered the phone, and informed the caller her husband was still asleep. She attempted to awaken him, but she could not; Bernard Herrmann had died in his sleep that night. He had become a part of that vastness he had reproduced in musical terms so beautifully, so many times during his career. It's sad to think of Herrmann as a part of the past, especially since his music will always be a part of the future. Despite the fact that Herrmann's music is now a finite quantity, the recordings of that beautiful music will continue to be issued for many years to come, and will continue to be listened to; probably for many centuries, in many places. ●

DR. WHO COMES TO AMERICA

(Continued from page 53)

absorbing all living energy and leaving behind a dead sphere.

Colony in Space [six chapters]. While colonists and mineralogists feud for land rights on a bleak planet 500 years from now, "The Master" (an evil Time Lord) schemes to gain control of a doomsday machine that is hidden in the ruins of an ancient city. Who is determined to prevent him from using this weapon to blackmail the entire galaxy.

Curse of Peladon [four chapters]. Sometime in the future, the Galactic Federation is a union of all intelligent life in the immediate universe. They send a delegation to the remote and primitive planet of Peladon to consider admitting it into the organization. Someone attempts to sabotage this conference, and Who becomes involved in the intrigue when his Tardis makes an accidental landing near the scene and is mistaken for the delegate from Earth.

Daleks [four chapters]. Rebel humans return from the 22nd century, where they are slaves to the dreaded Daleks, in order to change history and avert the alien conquest. Who must combat his old enemies and also convince his

rebels that they, themselves, are going to cause the catastrophes they have come back to prevent.

Demons [five chapters]. When an archeological team cuts through a prehistoric barrow to the tomb beyond, they unleash terrible forces. Consequently, The Master, together with a coven of witches, calls forth the demon Azal. Although the villain wants to be ruler of the world, Azal is thinking of destroying it, altogether. Who, in his attempts to overcome the demon and its redeemer, is nearly burned at the stake.

Inferno [seven chapters]. A drilling project releases a gas that turns humans into Primords, and at the same time it threatens to explode the planet. Who travels through the space-time continuum to a world parallel to ours, and just a few hours ahead of it, where Doomsday does indeed arrive.

Mind of Evil [six chapters]. A machine that "executes" criminals by extracting the evil particles from their brains is discovered to contain an alien parasite that feeds on crime. Behind this insidious plot to amass evil is Who's arch-enemy, The Master, who plans to provoke a global war in which he will emerge the only victor.

Mutants [six chapters]. Who and his assistant are transported hundreds of years into the future to

Skybase One, a giant space station in orbit around the planet Solos, on which a mysterious plague of mutations is turning the inhabitants into strange monsters. The Time Lord discovers that the megalomaniac Marshal, who controls Solos, is oxygenizing the atmosphere; this will make the sphere suitable for Earthlings, but unfit for native Solonians. As the aliens rebel against Skybase, Who and an exiled scientist seek the cause and cure for the mutations.

Sea Devils [Six chapters]. The title creatures are a lizard-like race of intelligent beings that once ruled Earth. A colony of them is revived on the seabed near the island of The Master. When ships begin to vanish mysteriously, Who investigates and learns that his foe is developing a machine that will revive Sea Devil colonies all over the world. With their help, The Master hopes to take over the planet.

Silurians [seven chapters]. Energy generated by a nuclear reactor resurrects the Silurians: intelligent reptiles that evolved millions of years before mankind. In hibernation to avoid extinction, they now emerge to reclaim the globe that they regard as rightfully theirs.

Terror of Autons [four chapters]. The Master arrives on our world and allies himself with the Nestenes,

who are aliens bent on invading Earth with an army of plastic Autons. Who must thwart them and other sinister plastic weapons devised by his most persistent foe.

Time Monster (six chapters). Who and a companion follow The Master through time to Atlantis. It is there that the villain plans to seize the Crystal of Kronos, which would give him power over time itself. Naturally, such a situation could very well bring about the end of the entire universe. ●

MATINEE SCI-FI

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pany rocketed to Mars in order to stop a devastating Nitron Cannon. Lo and behold, Ming was back from the dead, and serving (but waiting to command) the Queen of Mars. (Serial villains usually had titles like "Emperor of the Universe," "Ruler of the World," and other grandiose misnomers.) As one might expect, not the queen's blackmagic, the Clay or Tree People, futuristic weaponry, nor anything else was able to stop Flesh for long. By the conclusion, the Nitron Cannon was silenced, Earth safe, the angry Red Planet in the hands of allies, and Ming was dead (or, so it seemed). Although this effort was considerably inferior to **Flesh Gordon**, it had its moments.

Next came **Buck Rogers** (1939), which was based on a successful comic strip that had poor artwork and was badly written. Owing to its popularity, though, Universal made a 12-chapter serial based on this character, starring Buster Crabbe. While **Flesh Gordon** closely followed the strip's storyline, **Buck Rogers** deviated enormously. Gone were the Mongol hordes that had conquered the planet, and in their place was a criminal organization. A teenager named Buddy was thrown in for viewer identification purposes, and, while action was fast-paced and somewhat silly, deaths were almost non-existent. Aside from **Captain Video** (later, folks), this production probably sported the greatest number of science-fiction devices—from teleportation chambers to mind-control helmets, spaceships, invisibility machines, and many other mind-boggling goodies. Finally, with the help of the inhabitants of Saturn, Buck and the Hidden City, rebels saved the day and gained control of

the world. Although Buck never returned to the screen, Universal Television is considering doing a live-action weekly series (during the early 1950s, there was a cheap, short-lived program based on the character). Hopefully, it will be a lot better than the serial.

The Phantom Creeps (1939) contained the ugliest-looking (eight feet tall) robot I have ever seen—and I've seen them all. This tin cutie was controlled by mad Bela Lugosi, who was out to rule the sphere. Unfortunately, this effort lacked superheroes, aliens, and a futuristic look, but it proved to be rather entertaining because of its atmospheric style. In the final chapter, the robot was blown up and the villains suffered the same fate.

The final part of the trilogy, **Flesh Gordon Conquers the Universe**, was released in 1940. This time around, the costumes and sets were quite lavish, and the designer stuck to the comic strip's basic designs. Anyway, our hero and his friends were back on Mongo in this fitting conclusion to the saga. Naturally, Ming was back in action—and somehow restored to his throne—but in time goodness prevailed and the evil ones were vanquished.

In addition to the usual SF elements, this serial was the only one of the three to contain robots—nasty, exploding ones, at that. Due to the success of **Star Wars** and **Close Encounters of the Third Kind**, Dino diLaurentis has announced that he will be making a multi-million-dollar theatrical movie about "what's-his-name," in the near future. Let's pray that he does a better job with this than he did with **King Kong**. Incidentally, there has already been a German-made TV show and a porno motion picture (**Flesh Gordon**) about Flash.

A masked do-gooder called Copperhead (because he wore a copper mask) challenged **The Mysterious Dr. Satan** (1940), a robot-builder of ill repute. By employing common criminals and a bank-robbing robot, Satan succeeded in acquiring a lot of money and killing off a number of enemies before the defender of justice zonked both the villain and his metal toy.

Another mechanical contraption, the Metalogen Man, turned up in **The Monster and the Ape** (1945). Although he was built by a benevolent scientist, the robot was stolen by

criminals who used the thing for nefarious purposes. They also had a pet ape (6 feet tall) that did their bidding, but who worked for bananas. As in all other serials, the goodguys got the upper hand in the end and turned the tables on their foes.

Mars sent an invader to do us in, and this human-looking chap caused a great many problems in **The Purple Monster Strikes** (1945). Later on, a female alien joined him, and together they possessed locals and hired criminals to pave the way for an invasion. By the finale, the woman had fallen off a cliff and the male was blown up while taking off in his spaceship.

Brick Bradford, another comic strip hero, made it to the big screen in 1947. With the help of his formidable Time Top, he and his companions traveled to other ages and distant worlds in order to defeat their evil opponents. The funniest scenes took place on the Moon, where the dumbest-looking outfits were fashionable. Needless to say, this was not a classic.

Another alien arrived on Earth in 1948, but this time he was somebody special: **Superman**. The opening chapter revealed his origin on Krypton, subsequent adoption by the Kents and his move to Metropolis. Later on, after taking a job as a reporter with the **Daily Planet**, he tangled with the villainous Spider Lady. This tough gal came equipped with kryptonite, a reducer-ray, and other assorted sundries. Despite all of her power, though, the Man of Steel prevailed.

Another super-hero, **King of the Rocket Men**, debuted in theaters in 1949. Wearing a bullet-shaped helmet, a control box and a set of rockets, he was able to fly without burning off his legs (miraculous!) His opponent was known as Dr. Vulcan, and had developed a Dacimator that he eventually used to destroy most of New York City. Arriving a little late to save the unfortunate residents, the good guy stopped his enemy from harming anyone else. In case anybody is interested, stock footage from **Deluge** was used in the final chapter.

"What's-his-face" returned in **Atom Man vs. Superman** (1950). Arch-foe Lex Luthor was secretly the Atom Man, and under this guise he used his scientific brilliance to terrorize the country. Not only did he create a teleportation booth that

seemed to disintegrate our favorite Kryptonian at one point, but he made some synthetic kryptonite, which he used to render Superman helpless. All was well by the finale, though.

In 1951, **Captain Video** was released; unlike all other serials, this one was based on a television program. Containing 15 episodes in all, it related the adventures of the title character and his faithful companions as they rocketed through the universe. Another first for serials was that some of it was tinted; each planet had its own significant color, and all scenes taking place in outer space were in color (sort of). Last but not least, this production sported the greatest number of SF devices ever. Naturally, there were some villains, and a few robots, as well.

Another invader made it to our unsuspecting world in **Flying Disc Man from Mars** [1951]. Employing the typical array of traitors, he set up a base of operations within a volcano. From there, he directed an assortment of futuristic devices, but the good guys tracked him down and blew up his lair.

The Mysterious Island [1951] was [very] loosely based on Jules

Verne's novel. While this started off like the book, it quickly threw in an expedition of Mercurians who were out to control our ancestors. Captain Nemo and a group of castaways opposed the female leader and her male subordinates, and a super-explosion ended up destroying the location and the evil ones.

Rocket Man returned in **Radar Men from the Moon** [1952], and you can probably guess the plot from the title. When our hero and his super-secret space agency learned that illegal aliens were in our midst, they immediately set out to stop the trespassers. After a number of space battles, tank chases, robot fights and whatnot, the Lunarians were beaten.

Another Rocket Man came along in **Zombies of the Stratosphere** [1952], which dealt with a trio of Martians that were out to wipe out humanity. One of these aliens, amusingly enough, was played by none other than Leonard Nimoy, who had a change of heart at the conclusion and warned the hero about an impending disaster. Aside from the water-breathing invaders, spaceships and a robot were part of the fast-paced action.

peril they present for mankind (not to mention the movie's stars). These are genuine concerns with which we can still identify. Fortunately, Bronislau Kaper's music for **Them** is also not "period"; it's good, solidly orchestrated music.

Them also has something coincidental in the way of casting; it is among the first science fiction appearances by Leonard Nimoy, who is [very] briefly seen as a soldier commenting on a teletype message concerning the giant ants. For those

each shocked by their own blindness, suddenly hear one small child ask if everyone on the plane is blind. The passengers now realize they are dying; panic spreads to everyone on the plane.

Bill and Susan have traveled through London and have arrived at the shipyard where his freighter is docked. They arrive at the waterfront just in time to see the plane crash into a ship. The accident makes Masen realize there is little hope here; they must leave England before the Triffids overrun the entire island. Bill commandeers

The last actual made-for-theaters serial was **The Lost Planet** [1953], which was a fanciful romp through the galaxy. The good guys traveled to an alien planet, where they were imprisoned by typical extraterrestrial villains. While there were no robots in this offering, there were many other intriguing devices.

A serial that had been made for television, but which eventually made it to theaters, was **Commando Cody**. Each of these 12 chapters was complete unto itself, and they all ended without cliffhangers. Throughout the film, the Rocket Man from **Radar Men from the Moon** thwarted the efforts of Moonies who were out to destroy us. Every week, a new threat to Earth was overcome, and at the conclusion the villains were either killed off or captured.

Naturally, there were many other serials that contained SF elements, but the ones that I have covered are the hard-core titles. While they are dumb, for the most part, they hold a certain charm that makes most of them worth watching—not necessarily from beginning to end, but at least in parts. Like so many other old productions, they were made to entertain on a simplistically fantastic level. In this respect, they certainly succeeded. ●

nostalgia buffs out there, here's a bit of trivia. Rumor has it that Walt Disney was originally asked to consider James Arness for the role of **Devil Crockett**. While watching **Them** to gauge Arness' abilities, Disney is supposed to have noticed the delivery of Fess Parker [cast in the minor role of a pilot who saw giant ants flying toward Los Angeles], and immediately chose him for the Crockett role [while Arness waited two more years to achieve fame as Marshall Matt Dillon on **Gunslinger**]. ●

THEM!

(Continued from page 39)

ence fiction production **Close Encounters of the Third Kind** (Columbia, 1978).

With all its carefully conceived publicity, and its first-rate production values, **Them** is still an enjoyable film while many films about A-Bomb produced mutations are obsolete. The stress in the film is not on the creatures themselves, but on the

THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS

(Continued from page 57)

she can still see, Susan is used as a "seeing eye human" until rescued by Masen. The two decide to journey away from London together.

Meanwhile, other disasters are occurring all over the world. On an airliner, the entire compliment of passengers and crew have been struck blind. The pilot realizes that the plane is doomed. The passengers,

But Coker is killed by a Triffid. Susan, meanwhile, has befriended a blind girl, Bettina, who is staying in Christine's home. Bill wants to leave the vicinity with Christine and Susan before the Triffids overrun the place, but as long as so many people are dependent upon Christine's hospitality, he stays. One day, after exploring the land surrounding the estate, Bill returns to discover the Chateau has been taken over by a group of sighted escaped convicts. While the convicts take advantage of the helpless women in the house, Triffids are attracted by the sounds of music and screams. They break through the walls and windows, killing the drunk convicts and their blind hostages. Bettina is killed by a Triffid as she gropes her way out of the house.

Now there is nothing to hold Bill, Christine and Susan at the house, and they travel toward the Spanish naval base at Alicante.

Back at the lighthouse, a Triffid attacks Karen and Tom. He harpoons the monster and, presuming it dead, proceeds to dissect it. But he's forgotten he's dealing with a plant, not an animal; the Triffid, unknown to the scientists, is still alive.

In Spain, Masen and company stop at the home of Luis and Teresa de la Vega; the de la Vegas are blind, and she is expecting a baby. As the baby is born, Triffids attack and Bill fights them off using a gasoline hose as a flame-thrower. Bill discovers the Triffids are attracted by sounds; he finds a circus truck, turns on its loud cellophane and drives away decoying the killer plants and permitting Christine, Susan and the de la Vegas to escape.

As Karen and Tom try to sleep in the lighthouse, the Triffid returns to life. It climbs up the stairs of the lighthouse; fortunately, Karen hears its characteristic "swishing" noise and investigates. She screams, and Tom fights the Triffid with the closest weapon at hand; an emergency fire hose that squirts a pressurized jet of seawater at the Triffid. As the terrified couple watch, the Triffid melts into a green puddle. They have found the answer to the world's problem. Once they radio their information to the mainland, the Triffids will be exterminated in short order. As the Goodwins celebrate their good luck and their renewed love for each other, Masen and his friends reach Alicante safely, and board a submarine heading for a rescue base;

they will shortly learn about the Goodwins' discovery, and the entire world will soon be free of the Triffids.

The Day of the Triffide has one major flaw. The really effective duo of performers [Kieron Moore and Janetta Scott as Tom and Karen Goodwin] appear too infrequently during the film. If they had been cast as Bill Masen and Christine Durrant, the film would have profited. Howard Keel [Masen] and Nicole Maurey [Christine] really try, but Keel's performance fails to mirror the true scope of the tragedy he sees around him. When he discovers that sound attracts the Triffids, the audience almost expects him to say something like "I'll sing and scare them away." Happily, no such line was written into the script.

The film, in fact, takes itself completely seriously, which is why it succeeds as much as it does. There is no comic relief; it would have been illogical under the circumstances.

The only "diversion" from the main action is the friendship that develops between Susan and the blind Bettina. [Carole Ann Ford's role of "Bettina" is virtually identical to "Camille," the blind native girl portrayed by Barbara Luna in Columbia's **The Devil at Four O'clock** in 1961.] This short series of scenes defines the character of Susan and intensifies the drama of the film.

Wally Veevers' special effects not only take themselves seriously, but also appear to be expensively conceived. While most films would avoid showing too much destruction and too many distance shots of cities in flames and planes crashing into ships, **The Day of the Triffide** has such scenes at every opportunity. The majority appear to be accomplished with optical paintings

and careful matte work.

In one unforgettable shot, Howard Keel stands before a fence on the other side of which are thousands and thousands of Triffids. Upon close examination, it's evident that only the first couple of rows of Triffids are really there; the rest are a highly detailed matte painting. The scene is tremendously effective, though; especially when flames are double-exposed over the entire vast mob of Triffids.

The opening shots of the meteor shower are especially impressive, and were probably shot using paintings and photos on an animation stand, with animated overlays providing the bright contrasting areas over the greenhouse.

Noted composer Ron Goodwin worked with talented Johnny Douglas on the score of **Triffids**. Goodwin has since recorded several fine albums interpreting other composers' movie scores, and has written some fine ones of his own [including **The Battle of Britain**].

Howard Keel is known for his appearances in musicals; especially the films **Seven Brides for Seven Brothers** and **Show Boat** [both 1950's MGM productions].

Mervyn Johns [Professor Coker] starred in the fine British horror film **Dead of Night** [Ealing: 1945] as a man whose violent nightmares were actually psychic premonitions that came true during the film.

English actress Janetta Scott and Irish actor Kieron Moore act so beautifully together that they were teamed again as lovers in **Clock in the World**.

The Day of the Triffide is another film that would probably do well if it was theatrically reissued during the current science-fiction trend. ●



Professor Coker (Mervyn Johns) is about to be killed by a Triffid as Bill Masen (Howard Keel) worries about their chances of survival.

A PREVIEW OF METEOR

(Continued from page 26)

no novice on the disaster scene, having directed the "classic" that started it all: **The Poseidon Adventure**.

On **Meteor** the special-effects assignment goes to veteran Glenn Robinson, whose fine work was seen most recently on the abominable

York subway that is buried in a mud slide; even the office of the president of the United States.

Music for the film is being handled by the omnipresent John Williams, whose scores for **Jaws**, **Star Wars** and **Close Encounters of the Third Kind** have been so successful. Williams has been asked to compose all incidental music and create a special meteor symphonic suite for the film. With **The Fury**, **Superman** and **Meteor** in recent months it seems that Williams has become the composer for any fantasy-oriented film.

American International Films, the company bankrolling **Meteor**, is, of course, familiar to all genre fans. Started in the late fifties to produce drive-in and second-feature material for the teenage crowd, AIP

year's **Island of Dr. Moreau** is an example. Now, with the forthcoming **Star Creech** and **Meteor**, the company seems ready to challenge the majors.

Meteor, the latest in a continuing line of movies about disasters — is it escapism for a world gone totally pessimistic? Impossible to tell now, but the success (or failure) of **Meteor** will have much to say about the continuation of this type of film as a genre. And this may be the perfect film to base such a judgment on; it is certainly the most ambitious of the disaster films to date, and certainly is going after the biggest target. One can only wait and see whether Sean Connery and his costars (and the earth itself) can survive the strike of the **Meteor**.



▲ With the command center destroyed by the meteorite impact, Sean Connery and Natalie Wood aid Brian Keith and begin to search for a way to safety.

Cino de Laurentis version of **King Kong**. Robinson's work on **Meteor** has been helped by a substantial portion of the film's \$16-million budget. And this money will be needed for the large-scale miniature work and complicated process work involved in the earthly devastation sequences as well as the complex outer-space shots.

Still more of the budget has gone into some of the most titanic sets ever built. Four of the largest sound stages at MGM studios were used for **single sets**—one of which is the largest three-dimensional set ever constructed (no panoramic background to increase apparent size). These sets represent the main staging areas of the film: the space facility of the exciting conclusion; a New



▲ Seated around a conference table, discussing upcoming scenes from American International's **Meteor**, are (left to right) Sean Connery, director Ronald Neame, and stars Joseph Campanella and Karl Malden.

Natalie Wood and Sean Connery work together to stop a meteor shower from destroying Earth in **Meteor**.

developed the talents of people like Bruce Dern, Jack Nicholson, Roger Corman and Francis Ford Coppola. Recently, they have been making a move toward big "A" features. Last





Olivia deHavilland succumbs to the horrible attack of killer bees in Irwin Allen's newest disaster epic, *Swarm*.

Sissy Spacek as "Carrie" wreaks havoc at her school prom.



"The incredible Melting Men" must devour human blood to maintain his "good looks."



Carrie Snodgrass as the unfortunate victim in Brian DePalma's latest thriller, *The Fury*.



Richard Benjamin and the
gorgeous Barnstable twins
from NBC TV's *Quark*.

